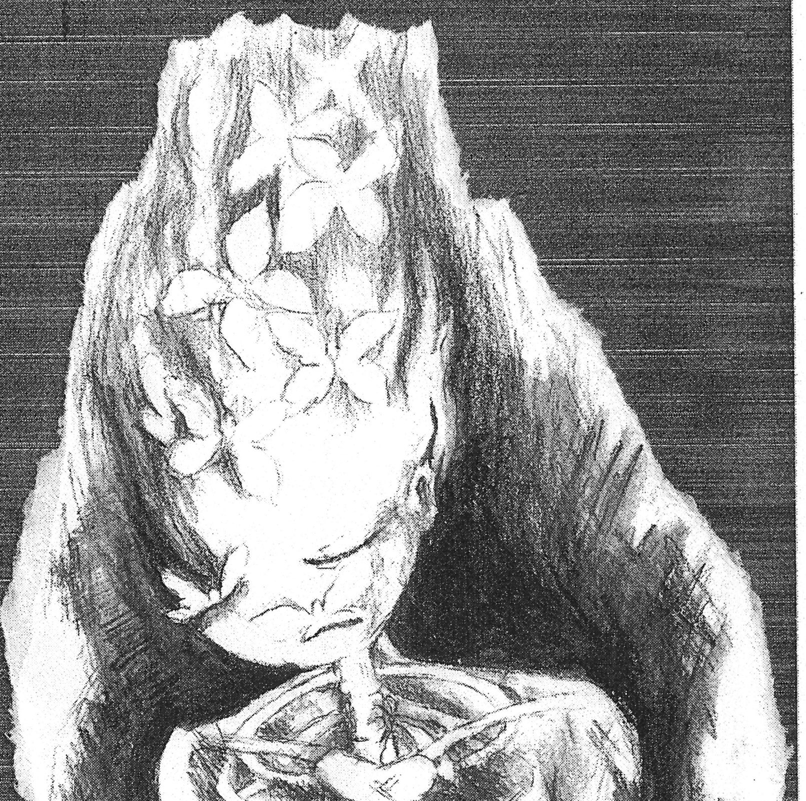
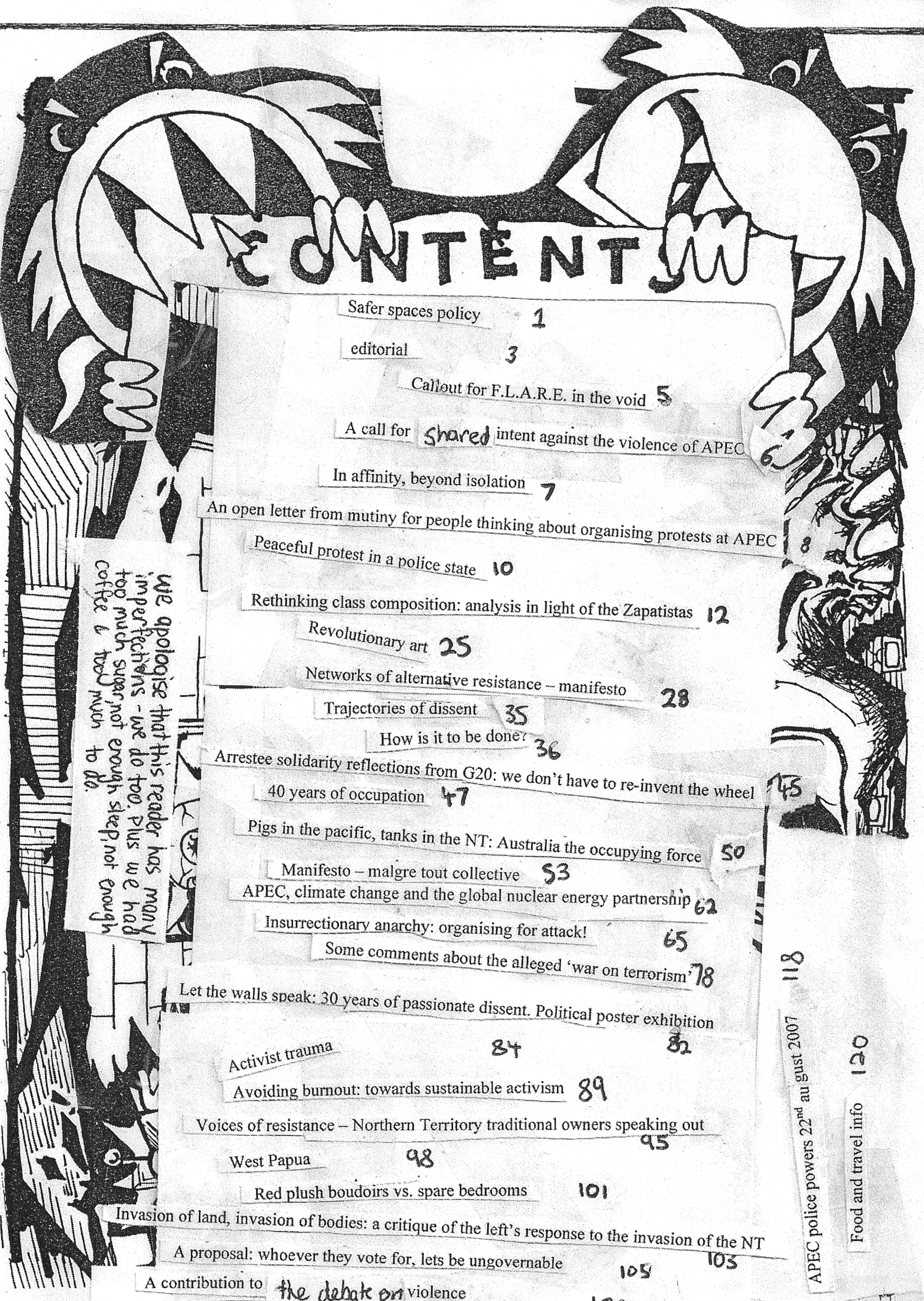


F.L.A.R.E in the void

for liberation autonomy resistance exodus

Convergence

4th sept – 9th sept 2007



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we apologise that this reader has many imperfections – we do too. Plus we had too much sugar, not enough sleep, not enough coffee & too much to do.

Safer Spaces for F.L.A.R.E in the void

WE want to create a space together. A space that is safe. A space that is respectful of each of our stories, our experiences, our pains and fears. We want to open a space to explore our privileges, and within our relationships and interactions, live towards a world free of oppression, assault, marginalisation and inequality. This is a survivor-centric space.

We want to acknowledge the varied journeys that have bought people here today. We need to accept that no space can be totally safe for all peoples. However, we need to believe that through self-organizing, self awarness, and willingness to challenge our own behaviour, we *can* create a space that is SAFER.....

We should be asking ourselves about our privilages while we are creating this radical space.How they might be affecting people around you.... Are you speaking too much? Are you a white middle class man dominating discussion? A man standing over a womyn? A highly educated womyn speaking too much? We ask that you look around and wonder who is not being heard? It is up to you to make an effort to open up a space for others to speak.

We are here to create and build together new strengths in our networks. For these networks to grow in the right way, we need to challenge each other, in the way that we engage with one another. To look at the way we have grown up and participated in capitalism and patriarchy. We want to challenge the capitalist, the rapist, the racist, the mysoginost, the homophobe, and relearn our desires and dreams for what we really want. We want to do this together.

We are here to celebrate all sexualities (queer, lesbian, gay, hetero, bi, asexual, questioning etc).

We are here to celebrate the spectrum of gender identity (male identified, female identified, trans, intersex, genderqueer, ftm, mtf, genderqueer etc)

Dont asume someones gender identity, and if youre not sure, ask! be aware of how much notions of binary gender are embedded in our language. try replacing 'him' or 'her' with 'they' "

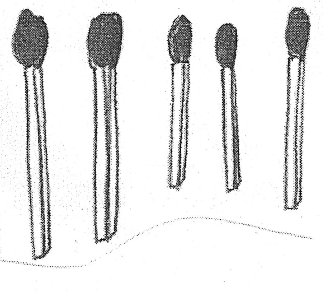
We are here to share spaces and recognise all our abilities and dif-abilities, and work out how to live together.

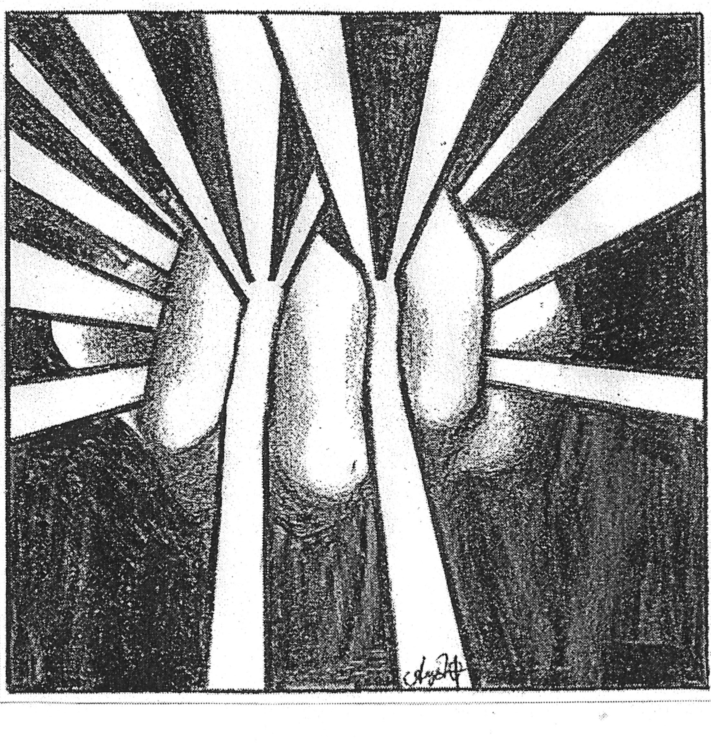
We are here to create a space for those who haven't been heard, who have been absent, who have been forgotten, a space where differentces of communication (language/articulation) are not judged.

We are here to explore how we can ensure our many ideas for change and new ways of being, are embedded within a framework of respect for the culture, stories and needs of the Indigenous peoples of this land. How can we create a self organizing society that coexists with an acknowledgement of Indigenous sovereignty?

5 points of what Safer Spaces is all about.....

- Respecting people's physical, mental and emotional boundries
- Always getting explicit verbal consent before touching or crossing someones boundries
- Respecting all people's opinions, beliefs, differing states of being (mental/physical & other), and differing points of view
- Being responsible for your own actions and the effects they have on others
- Taking responsibility for your own safety and get help if you need it





Grievence Committee

******If you are not ok and something has happened. You can call the F i t v phone or go to the info desk and find out who to speak to. F.L.A.R.E in the void will have a grievence commity. This will be a group of people from all different places/comunities/experiences.******

We are calling for people to create a grievence commity at F i t v. We are asking that a person from each affinity/traviling/friendship group has someone who comes to a meeting to talk about possible stratigies of support. We encorage people who haven't been involved in safer spaces organizing before.
The GC role will be there to support and mediate the possible issues of sexual/racist/trans/homophobic assult issues that may come up during F.L.A.R.E in the void. We want the grievence commity to be accesible.

Things at F i t v that we will try and provide to make this space/convergence week safer-funner!!!!!!

F.L.A.R.E in the void is a dry space. No drug use and no alcohol consumption. We want people to be clear on their decisions and to hear decsions clearly. This will be a busy week and people will need their sleep if they decide to have it. We know that people will want to get wasted. Please have respect when coming into the space drunk . There is heaps of other places to party. We'll see you there!

Safe[r] accommodation.......
We recognise that many unwanted/non-consensual sexual encounters occur when people don't have a place to stay and/or end up sharing sleeping space with someone out of necessity/desperation/blurred judgement. We understand that when people are in a precarious or vulnerable situation where they don't have a place to stay, it is easy to take whatever accommodation/shared bed is offered.
Therefore, we would like to offer safe(r) accommodation to anyone who needs it during F.L.A.R.E in the void. During the convergence, please speak to someone at the info-table (at the entrance to the space) for assistance with this. There is a phone that you can call whenever.
We are hoping to provide a communal sleeping space during the convergence, this will include a womans only sleeping space, a family/children sleeping space, trans/queer sleeping space.
There will be more information on the info sheet and flareinthevoid.webpress.com closer to the convergence

childcare.....
so that parents can have fun and get amongst the action. We want to set up a childcare that is not parents-only run. There will be a roster and people are encouraged to help out.

Accesibility of convergence space and sleeping spaces.
There will be measurements of doorways, number of stairs and info about dif-ability toilets put on flareinthevoid.webpress.com and printed on a seperate info sheet that will be available just before the convergence. We appologise that this information is not available in the reader!!!

Police Policy....
An important part of making the space safe (both practically and emotionally) is keeping the cops out, so I think it's worth adding a NPP-No Police (pigs) Policy.
We will not let police in the space.
Do not answer the door if the cops arrive. Tell people and we should have a meeting asap!! If the pigs turn up with a warrant, we will to read the warrant, to check if all the information is correct.
We can call or email Dale Mills on 0422 644 363 and dalemills@cantab.net for good legal adivice.

On undercovers & security

We want to create an open and inclusive space. We need to assume that there will be undercover cops at this convergence, but no one should be called as being a cop based on their appearance or dress.

We should think about ways of creating a general culture of security so we don't have to fear undercover cops.

Suggestions:
- don't give out anyone's name / contact details without checking with them first. Point people towards publicly available contacts, or take and pass on a message.
- keep contact lists secure
- don't talk about individuals' involvement in particular actions or plans
- don't ask or talk about someone else's, or your own, participation in any action that was/is illegal
- talk to people on a need to know bases.

no photos to be taken at flare. We should learn from g20 and the thug hunt....

editorial

In general, the origins of the F.L.A.R.E. in the Void (FITV) convergence are based in a response to two key problems: 1) out of a desire and need to construct meaningful relationships within and between the movements for liberation, to circulate lessons and experiences of struggle; and 2) out of a recognition of the need to collectively confront and explore the current political climate in all its violent extremities, and how to resist it. Running throughout these ideas was a conscious effort to articulate and celebrate our power, whilst critically reflecting on our experiences and identifying our weaknesses. Although FITV is coinciding with the APEC summit, the perspective and trajectory of the convergence was always pointed beyond the summit, in fact to a certain extent we were not really concerned with APEC at all. Instead, we chose to try and focus on how repression was being resisted, and liberation produced, throughout the world and our lives. While the bosses try and delude themselves into thinking they have control, we thought we would really explore and intensify the practices we undertake that prove they do not.

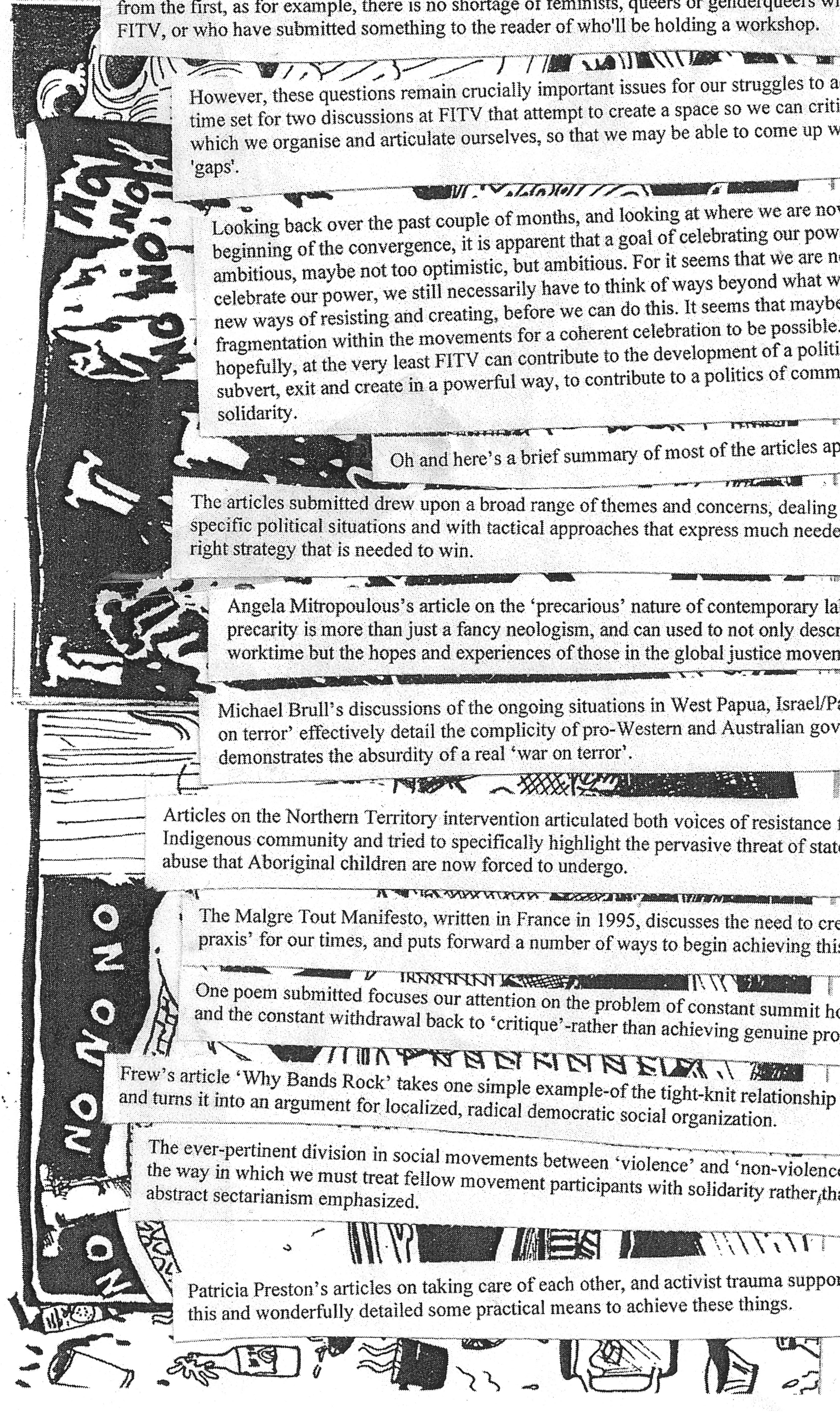
There have been arguments and debates at least since the 1999 WTO protest in Seattle about the usefulness, and strategic and tactical value of summit protests. Despite this there have been a number of anti-summit protests, which have often been successful by certain measures. However, it is also clear that the state has become increasingly effective in policing summit protests, through an intensifying deployment of violence. This fits into the generalised deployment of violence across the world upon the pretext of the war on terror. In certain respects, the state and capital have been successful in disorienting and repressing some sections of the movements for liberation. It is within this context that we saw a need to reflect upon, critique and celebrate all the measures we take to resist the brutality of global capitalism.

It seemed that one of the most important things we needed to do as a constellation of movements was to talk collectively about where we were at. Questions about how to act are never guaranteed with clear answers, but in the context of the war on terror, and the increasingly repressive climate, they are even less so. Communication assumes even more importance in this situation. It seems that a key problem of organisation and struggle lies in the relationship between co-ordinating resistance whilst resisting homogeneity and universality. There is a sophisticated politics, and often difficult practice, underlying the relationships between autonomy, difference, commonality and solidarity. We consider it a central project for revolutionar(ies)y movements to seriously consider these politics and their practice. As such, we thought that a convergence that would aim to do this and to assist in contributing to an ongoing organisational project beyond the convergence would be useful.

A part of the original idea of the convergence was to contribute to the construction of something other, to create spaces and relationships that in themselves were embodiments not only of resistance, but also of the liberatory principles we strive for. We wanted to assist in creating something that should be defended if necessary, rather than simply expressing force against the meetings of capital.

In relation to APEC, FITV initially tried to orient itself beyond the summit. In an attempt to resist reproducing roles and relationships constructed at previous events like this, FITV sought not to be a response to APEC. A problem that is commonly identified within summit protests, particularly in a context of an increasingly effective state, is that we are forced to act upon a terrain that is determined by the forces of repression. In this sense our actions and initiatives are necessarily projected through the occurrence of the summit, we are often acting in response to these meetings of the functionaries of capital and the state. The focus of FITV was originally much more about creating something that concentrated on our capacity to resist and subvert: to identify and critically celebrate our power; to acknowledge and articulate the reality of struggle and resistance and its pivotal role in the operations of global politics. Yet, FITV has increasingly become occupied with protesting at APEC. However, this does not, reflect a reactionary or shortsighted politic. Rather, it reflects a need to question the move towards a police state and the very real and concrete effects that this has on us all. We feel that resisting and defying the state at APEC is, of course, not going to bring about the changes in society that we seek and that we should continue to look beyond summit protests, but engaging in direct action at APEC will hopefully allow us to further realise our collective strength and our creative capabilities when we work together to achieve a common goal, such as trying to break police lines or blockading a road. This increasing focus is also about legitimising people's fear and anxiety in this climate of heightened police repression; it is about trying to take care of one another and ourselves so that we can continue to have to confidence to resist global capital.

Important questions about the various ways in which we organise have materialised along the way, such questions reflect the problems that there are huge 'gaps' in the breadth of this reader, as well as in the workshops being held at the convergence. Why are there no submissions or no sessions on race politics? Why is the organising collective almost all entirely white? How can we make the ways in which we organise and articulate our ideas more accessible to various communities? Further, questions about the lack of feminist, queer and gender submissions and sessions have also arisen. However, it seems that these two 'gaps' have appeared for very different reasons. The first gap is indicative of the failures and somewhat problematic nature in which we organise. Whereas the second gap can be put down to a number of reasons, such as the failures of summit protests to engage with other struggles, as well as the possibility that these struggles are somewhat splintered and isolated. We see this second gap as being fundamentally different from the first, as for example, there is no shortage of feminists, queers or genderqueers who are organising FITV, or who have submitted something to the reader of who'll be holding a workshop.



However, these questions remain crucially important issues for our struggles to address. Thus, we will be time set for two discussions at FITV that attempt to create a space so we can critically analyse the ways in which we organise and articulate ourselves, so that we may be able to come up with ways to fill these 'gaps'.

Looking back over the past couple of months, and looking at where we are now, about two weeks from the beginning of the convergence, it is apparent that a goal of celebrating our power may have been too ambitious, maybe not too optimistic, but ambitious. For it seems that we are not yet in a position to wholly celebrate our power, we still necessarily have to think of ways beyond what we have so far been capable of, new ways of resisting and creating, before we can do this. It seems that maybe there is still too much fragmentation within the movements for a coherent celebration to be possible. If this is the case, then hopefully, at the very least FITV can contribute to the development of a politics which is able to resist, subvert, exit and create in a powerful way, to contribute to a politics of commonality, difference and solidarity.

Oh and here's a brief summary of most of the articles appearing this reader…

The articles submitted drew upon a broad range of themes and concerns, dealing with both analysis of specific political situations and with tactical approaches that express much needed discussion about the right strategy that is needed to win.

Angela Mitropoulous's article on the 'precarious' nature of contemporary labour stresses the way in which precarity is more than just a fancy neologism, and can used to not only describe not only patterns of worktime but the hopes and experiences of those in the global justice movement.

Michael Brull's discussions of the ongoing situations in West Papua, Israel/Palestine and around the 'war on terror' effectively detail the complicity of pro-Western and Australian governments in war crimes, and demonstrates the absurdity of a real 'war on terror'.

Articles on the Northern Territory intervention articulated both voices of resistance from within the Indigenous community and tried to specifically highlight the pervasive threat of state-sanctioned sexual abuse that Aboriginal children are now forced to undergo.

The Malgre Tout Manifesto, written in France in 1995, discusses the need to create a 'new liberating praxis' for our times, and puts forward a number of ways to begin achieving this.

One poem submitted focuses our attention on the problem of constant summit hopping and street marching, and the constant withdrawal back to 'critique'-rather than achieving genuine progress.

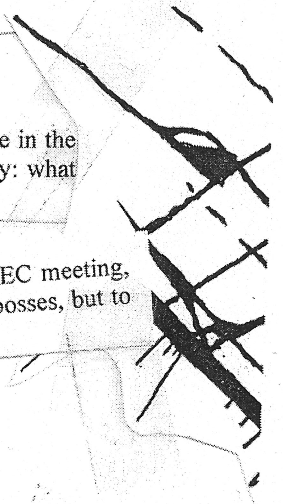
Frew's article 'Why Bands Rock' takes one simple example-of the tight-knit relationship between a band-and turns it into an argument for localized, radical democratic social organization.

The ever-pertinent division in social movements between 'violence' and 'non-violence' was discussed-with the way in which we must treat fellow movement participants with solidarity rather than falling into abstract sectarianism emphasized.

Patricia Preston's articles on taking care of each other, and activist trauma support stressed both the need of this and wonderfully detailed some practical means to achieve these things.

callout for F.L.A.R.E in the void

If we look, we can see the power of collective struggle across the globe. Yet we also witness war and oppression, and the power of the ruling class can seem greater than ever. This callout is an invitation to explore and confront this situation. While the functionaries of capital and the state meet in Sydney this year for the APEC conference, to discuss how to further their neoliberal assault on the earth and our lives, we too will meet, to discuss and organise our continuing struggle against them, and for liberation and a world we make together.



This is an open invitation for people to put on workshops, provide new ideas and help organise in the lead up to and during the convergence. We know that everyone is struggling in their own way: what we want is to share these experiences.

While the convergence might also be a space to plan actions that coincide with the APEC meeting, that's not all it can be. We do not wish to act solely in response to the meetings of the bosses, but to build our own bases of power.

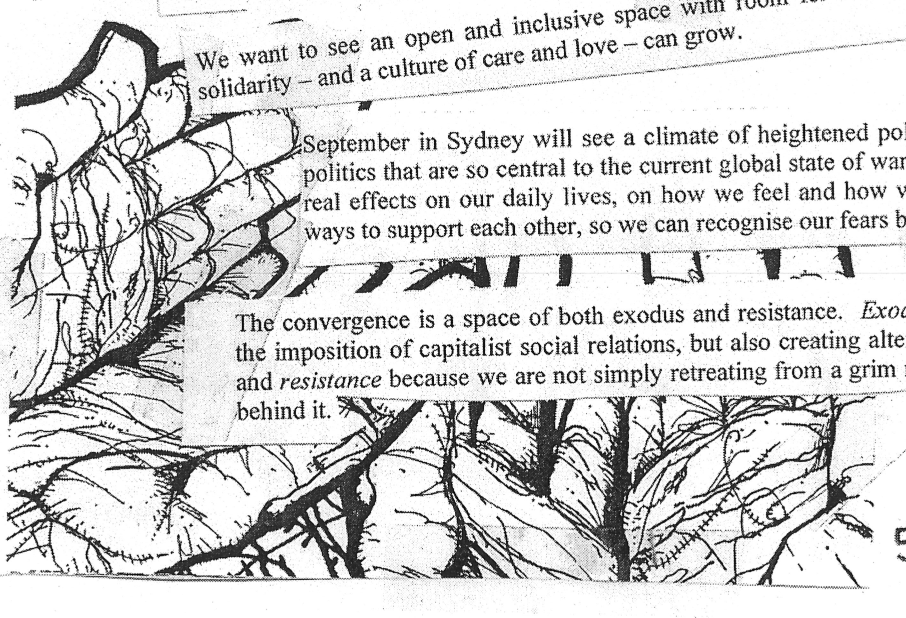
We want to bring together our experiences of resistance and struggle, individual and collective, from daily life, political campaigns and anywhere else.

The struggle for liberation involves an array of strategies of resistance and subversion: from conversations to liberating space, from cooking together to jamming the circuitry of capital at work, from actions in the street to calling each other on our shit.

It sometimes seems that our various struggles are just small cracks in the global capitalist system, but we can think about how these cracks meet up to form a network of global resistance, a network that has power. This is why it's important to meet and to talk about our daily struggles against global capital, to have an opportunity to listen to each other and teach each other.

We want to take time to think about the weaknesses as well as the strengths of what we do. We want to celebrate the ways we are powerful and the times we are able to combat the repressive power of capital.

We want to see an open and inclusive space with room for commonality and difference, in which solidarity – and a culture of care and love – can grow.



September in Sydney will see a climate of heightened police repression, the continuation of the fear politics that are so central to the current global state of war. The intensification of state repression has real effects on our daily lives, on how we feel and how we think about resistance. We have to find ways to support each other, so we can recognise our fears but continue to struggle.

The convergence is a space of both exodus and resistance. *Exodus* because we are not only refusing the imposition of capitalist social relations, but also creating alternatives through the ways we refuse; and *resistance* because we are not simply retreating from a grim reality but confronting the machinery behind it.

a call for shared intent against the violence of APEC

"We're not going to sit in silence, We're not going to live in fear."- John Farnham

The Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) is a forum where heads of governments in the Asia Pacific region, will meet to discuss economic and military strategies that will benefit ruling powers in the region. APEC heads of state will arrive in Sydney on Friday 7th and meet Saturday 8th September at the Opera House and Sunday 9th September at Government House.

In Australia, the policies of APEC have resulted in the privatisation and degradation of public transport, low wages, de-unionisation of workplaces, high cost housing, an elitist education system, increased military funding at the expense of education and health, and the lack of prevention of climate change.

As a colonial power in the Asia Pacific region, the Australian government has a direct interest in implementing these policies. In Papua New Guinea, East Timor, the Solomon Islands and elsewhere, Australian companies profit, with military enforcement, from the privatisation of public assets, the displacement of local indigenous peoples and environmental degradation. These policies create situations whereby people have a right to respond with anger. Governments can only maintain the legitimacy of such policies by maintaining an image of social control and demonising protest by committing millions of taxpayers' dollars to surveillance, repression and violence. But we are fighting for a better world.

The people who speak out against the repression of APEC will attend the protest as individuals on their terms. But with shared intent, good communication and collective organisation, we can participate in mass direct action that is both meaningful and strategic. This can send a strong message against the poverty and violence imposed by APEC's policies. It is important that we stay safe and minimise the repercussions of police repression in our families and communities.

We invite local community groups, individuals, unions and others to work with us and communicate with us before the event to develop a shared intent. A number of direct action training sessions will take place in Sydney and Melbourne to prepare for a mass, strategic intervention to the APEC meeting. We also support and hope to work alongside others taking action in whatever way they see fit.

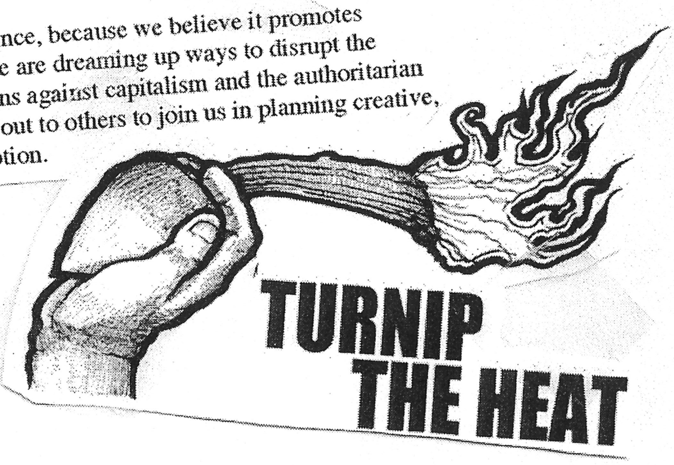
By the very praxis of stepping out and challenging their control of space we are committing what is regarded as a violent act. It is the violence of articulating resistance; it is a violation against their understanding of our lives.

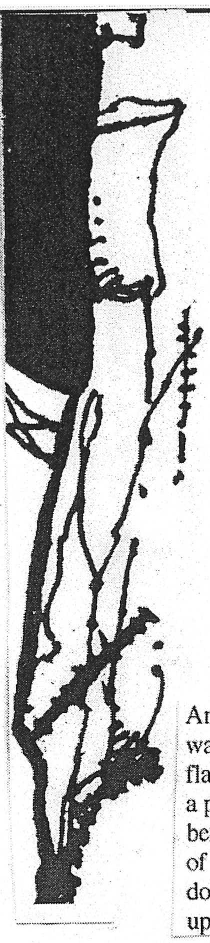
We want to act together with an approach that is empowering, strategic and fun. We want to use their borders against them. Our proposal is to disrupt their meeting by disrupting their control of the space, to challenge the exclusivity of their politics. We want to laugh together and keep each other tight at barricades, move together as a mobile obstruction and where we see a border silence us, we challenge them, we turn their zones into the political forum we want to have. We make it known that we don't agree and we are not going to live in fear.

A call for direct action at the anti- APEC protests will be big news in Sydney. But will people join us? Only if we can successfully delegitimise APEC, give people hope that disruption is possible, communicate powerfully why they should participate and most importantly counter the huge fear campaign which the state has rolled out against the people of Sydney.

This is a statement of our intent to disrupt the APEC conference, because we believe it promotes exploitation, inequality and the destruction of the planet. We are dreaming up ways to disrupt the conference whilst communicating our deeply held convictions against capitalism and the authoritarian state, and our belief that another world is possible. We call out to others to join us in planning creative, strategic disruptions, and to plan your own actions of disruption.

sharedintent@gmail.com





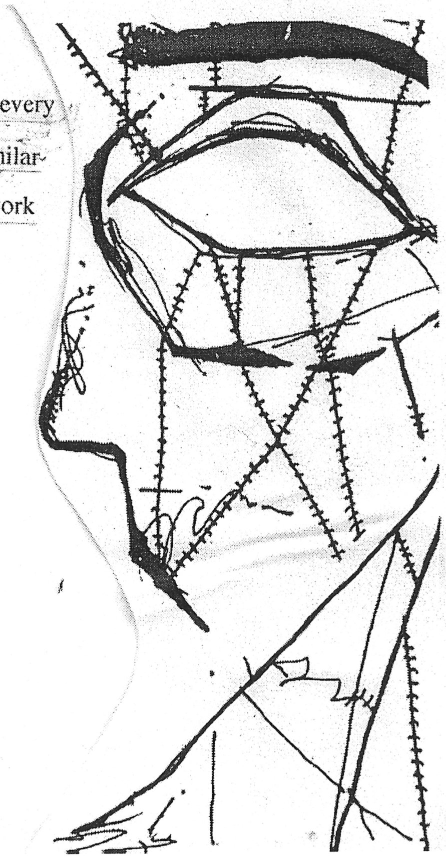
IN AFFINITY, BEYOND ISOLATION

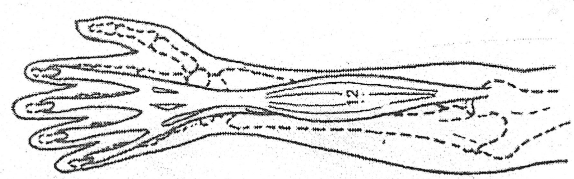
Although the idea of protest is meant to always be empowering, the opposite can also be true – a large protest can be intimidating and isolating. If you are there by yourself, or even with friends, it is possible to feel more like a spectator than a participant. Our suggestion is simple, to get together with friends or other people who want to do something similar to you and organise beforehand to be there together as an affinity group with some idea of how you want to participate rather than just spectate. If you don't know anyone else going, come to one of the events in the week before such as the FLARE in the Void convergence (Sept 5-7) or the Stop Bush meeting (evening of Sept 7th) where you can meet people and find out what other groups are doing.

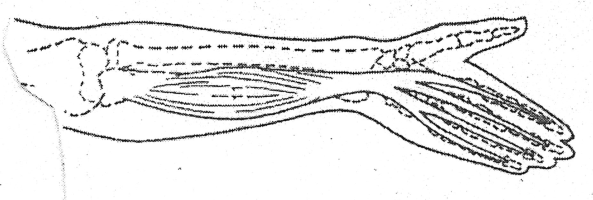
An affinity group can be any group of people and your plans don't have to be extraordinary. You may want to dress up similarly and engage in street theatre, paint a banner with your message, carry some flags or engage in particular acts of disobedience and direct action. Having numerous affinity groups at a protest adds to the vibrancy and breaks the sense of routine and conformity, that we've just done it all before. Participating in one is a step to ensuring you don't have to feel alienated as the usual 'leaders' of the protest tell you how to behave. Listening to endless speakers can be dull, think what you might do to make it less so. The same person on a megaphone yelling in your ear can be annoying, so make up your own songs and chants.

An affinity group would generally be about 5 – 15 people. In larger affinity groups it is a good idea to have one or two particular people who you stick close with. Yes, this is also about safety. We never know exactly how the police will react to a protest, particularly one that involves direct action and disruption. If you intend to partake in tactics of direct action or disruption, affinity groups are very important as you'll need people looking out for you. You might also need to agree to all dress similarly and with masks so you can be anonymous. But if you don't want to be involved in that type of action, it's just as important having people look out for you to ensure you don't get dragged into a situation you don't want to be in.

The most important aspect of affinity groups is communication. Opening lines of communication with other groups even if you don't want to tell them every detail of your plan creates the possibility of finding others who want to do similar actions. It also means groups with different ideas for type of action can still work together in a spirit of solidarity and respect.







an open letter from Mutiny to people thinking about organizing protests at APEC

Some people have said that they don't want APEC to be another G20. Neither do we. We don't want to see 'protest organisers' publicly denouncing other protesters. We don't want to see groups responding to a climate of police aggression by distancing themselves from those being targeted. We don't want to see groups so busy scrambling for crumbs of media 'legitimacy' that they willingly play into media hysteria about 'violence' and false and dangerous dichotomies between 'good' and 'bad' protesters.

We believe that in this climate it would be all too easy for any of us to find ourselves classed as 'bad protesters'.

So we're concerned to hear that the Sydney Stop Bush Coalition has decided to produce posters saying 'join the peaceful protest.' This text itself is minor, but it suggests worrying tendencies (which are not confined to a particular group.) To insist on 'peaceful protest' seems to be either naïve or dangerously cynical - and it aligns with the repression of dissent.

It's naïve if anyone who was at the recent demonstrations against Cheney didn't learn from them. No protester went there planning 'violence' - but the assembly decided to defy police and tried to push through police lines. This choice meant that it was not a 'peaceful protest' by many definitions (and certainly not by that of the corporate media.) Yet, the course of action taken was how the group felt it had to be done. To try to march, people chose to confront the police - and it was a confrontation in which many of us suffered violence and arrest.

The next day was equally instructive: an entirely passive crowd was terrorised by police snatch squads making utterly unfounded arrests. If people believe that negotiating with police will ensure a 'peaceful protest' then they don't seem to be living in the same city as us.

Obviously it's important to encourage large-scale defiance in which people can feel safe and brave whatever their level of involvement. The cops are clearly trying to make anyone who might think about protesting feel scared and we have to fight that. But insisting on the image of 'peaceful protest' only amplifies the wedge politics of the police and media: and it doesn't stop police violence. It seems downright irresponsible to promise - or demand - peace. *Obedience will not make us safer.*

In this context, it seems likely that, whatever the desire of the organisers, people *will* choose to attend the protest prepared for self-defence or other disobedient actions. Is the call for 'peaceful protest' an attempt by the small group producing the poster to say that such tactics and politics are not welcome at the protest? Of course anyone taking any action must take responsibility for it and the effects they might have on others. However, those who call a protest are not the boss or police of everyone who attends and cannot assume to control it. Is this group a coalition through which diverse events can be organised, or is it a collective planning a single march? (We assume it's the former; if not there is clearly a need for a broader group as well.)

If any groups were planning confrontational actions it would of course be essential that they worked with respect alongside others so that those who did not want to be involved wouldn't be drawn in against their will, and so that other actions were not interfered with. While communication was imperfect, this seemed to be fairly well done at the G20 - many people went on a march and went home, while those who overturned barricades etc were streets away. It's important to continue to improve communication, not shut it down.

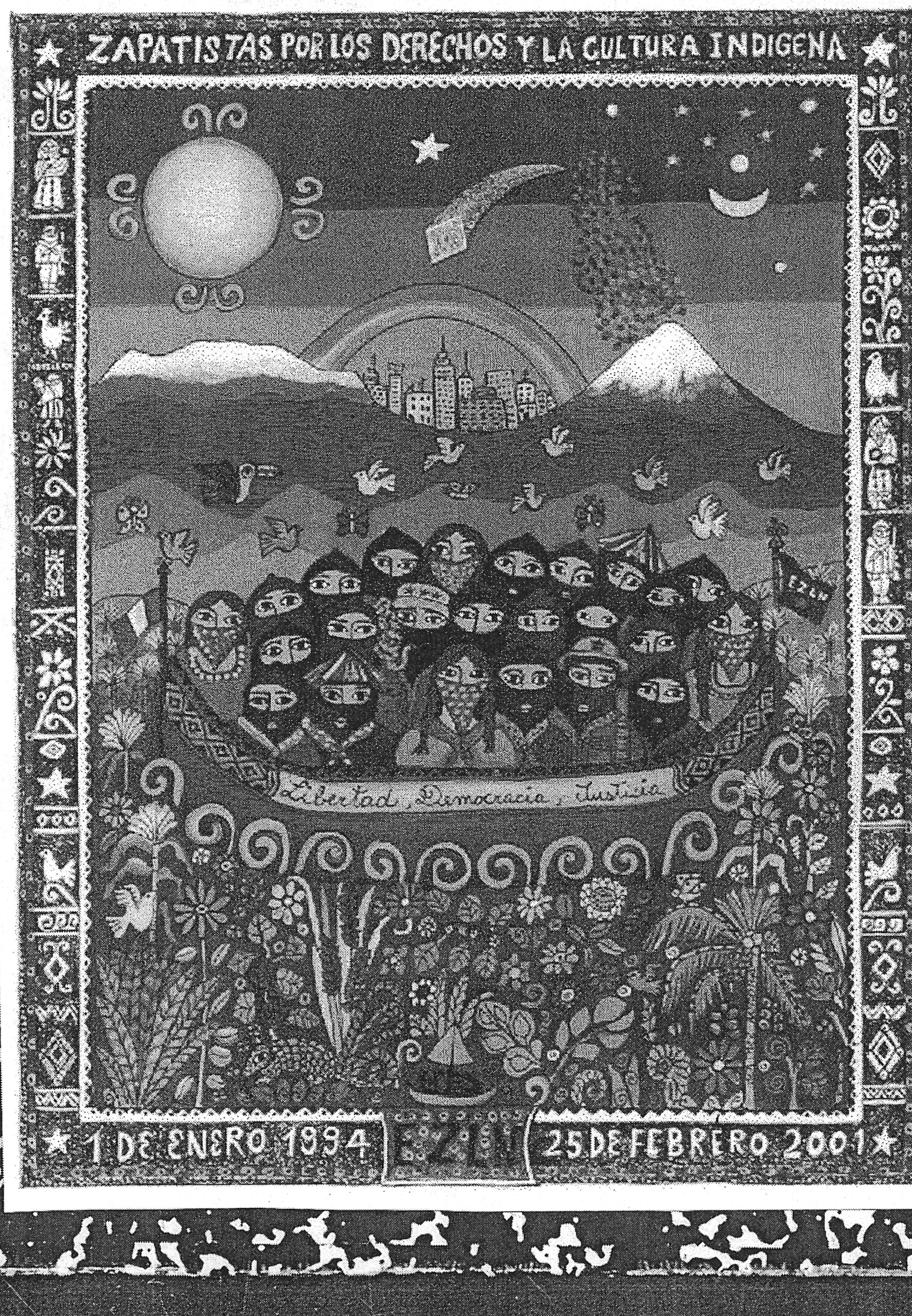
Our fear is that an assertion made now that the protests will be explicitly 'peaceful' will shut down the discussions that need to be had; that people will argue only that the protests should be 'peaceful' instead of accepting that people will organise in diverse ways; that a small group will attempt to define what is 'legitimate' for the entire protest rather than working to ensure mutual autonomy, safety and effectiveness.

This letter was not written because we're planning so-called 'violent protest' or know of some secret plans. We have no idea. Preparing for APEC protests has not been a priority for us as a group. The police preparations seem to strengthen the arguments against summit protest, especially doubts about the value of challenging the state on their terrain and when they are most prepared. On the other hand, they also strengthen feelings that it is important to defy police attempts to frighten us. This ambivalence is why we haven't been at meetings making these arguments; we hope this will as reason to dismiss our thoughts. We write in the hope that we or groups with politics similar to ours would be able to organise for APEC alongside others - in the hope that a diversity of tactics will be possible and the spaces for discussion and action will not be shut down.

In solidarity,

The Mutiny collective

(mutineers at graffiti dot net)


ZAPATISTAS POR LOS DERECHOS Y LA CULTURA INDIGENA
EZLN
Libertad, Democracia, Justicia
1 DE ENERO 1994
EZLN
25 DE FEBRERO 2001

Peaceful Protest in a police state

It is clear that APEC has become a major focus for many in the left, whether or not we have explicitly intended for this to be so. We write this letter not to cynically palm-off the work that other groups are doing, but to critically engage with the nature of the organising of anti-APEC protests. We think that the laws created to coincide with the summit, and our responses to them have greater and longer lasting implications than just for the day(s) of protest.

In a country that seems completely enthralled by the fear that the State is creating, we see the responses to the extended police powers for APEC as equally or more important than the fact that George Bush is coming to town. APEC is just a point in time in capitalism, and the laws that have been enacted to coincide with the summit are just a small part of the wider move towards a greater policed state. Appeals to the state and police to tolerate protest because it is integral to the functioning of democracy are damaging. They play into the hands of a false democracy where both parties outbid each other on who can give the police more powers. It plays into their hands because it is based on an assumption that if we agree to behave in a certain way - to be 'good' protesters – then the state should be accepting of our dissent.

It is ludicrous for anti-APEC organising groups to be suggesting to the corporate media that it is protesters' responsibility to create an atmosphere of peace, when 5000 police and 1500 troops will ensure there is an atmosphere of fear and tension, however we behave. This kind of language constructs the relationship between protestors and police as completely upside down. It is now the responsibility of protestors rather than the police to act 'peacefully' and 'responsibly' - in other words, to merely be a spectacle of dissent that legitimises the state's claim that it 'respects the right to protest'. This kind of language also cements the boundaries of debate that is taking place in the media about APEC. In a time when the media is frequently asking protest groups for a response to the policing of APEC, rather than actually taking the opportunity to put forth a radical critique of capitalism and the state, anti-APEC organising groups use language which allows the debate to be skewed in the direction where even the Chief Executive of the NSW Business Chamber can weigh in on the debate about peaceful protest: "There is a clear responsibility for groups who decide to protest to act peacefully and lawfully. The wider community respects the right to protest and equally respects the rights of people and businesses to go about their day without interference." (Smh 2/8)

Under such a protestor/state contract, protestors are expected to submit to the police's authority on where protest can occur and who can participate. This legitimises the police's state-appointed role as the city's urban planning agency- policing our bodies' ability to exist in what is supposed to be public space. This is the danger of making concessions to the police during APEC in exchange for permission to even be present as a protest body. This contract has no sunset clause.

A further effect of such negotiations with the state is the credibility given to the idea that there are two different orders of dissent- one legitimate and one not. While groups are appealing to police and security agencies to be less violent, ASIO is joining the terms terrorism and 'violent' protest under the same banner of 'politically motivated violence'. While this neat linguistic manoeuvre by ASIO is a development to be worried about (after all, how often is a protest not deemed as 'violent' by police and the media?), it is crucial to recognise its position on a continuum of increasing state violence. The antics of the state and police in the lead-up to APEC should not be unexpected and is in no way an end point in terms of repression. Those blaming such repression on any single event, such as the actions of Arterial Bloc at the G20 last year are either playing a cynical, political game or are historically ignorant.

What we have here is an increasingly paranoid, security state punching at shadows in its never-ending 'war on terror'. The cycle of fear and repression is self-perpetuating, as increased surveillance provides more pieces of 'intelligence' that work to fuel further scare campaigns and therefore arm the security agencies with even more power. The case of the Barwon 13 – a group of Muslim men held in maximum security under anti-terror laws, charged, not with planning a terrorist act – neither plans nor means were found – but with belonging to an unspecified, unnamed and unlisted terrorist organisation is indicative. It suits the government for fear to control our actions so closely. It means we turn to its 'benevolent' power to protect us.

The policing of our lives is everywhere and we are also meant to internalise it more than ever. It is pointless fighting such attacks on our lives within the context of the legal system. The law is a tool of the ruling class for maintaining their hegemony. The fear over 'the war on terror' created by the government and the media allows for the strengthening of the law and therefore for the tighter control of society. You cannot separate the law from this fear. Just as we can't appeal to the state to 'create a little less fear please', we can't appeal to the government to not create and enforce laws like the new APEC laws.

In practical terms we have seen the police become increasingly militarised, while the military take on more policing duties. The Australian Federal Police have recently announced the formation of a 1200-strong paramilitary wing called the International Deployment Group (IDG). They will be equipped with weapons and armoured personnel carriers, which will allow them to be deployed alongside the military. While the police are acting as the enforcers of Australian imperialism in the Pacific, the military are also blurring boundaries by re-invading Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory under the guise of protecting children. FA-18 fighter jets, Navy ships, and 1500 ADF soldiers will patrol the city during APEC, manning checkpoints, conducting vehicle and venue searches, and responding to any calls for assistance from police. Paramilitary arms of the Police, fighting for Imperial control of other nations, the military invading communities, patrolling city streets, skies and waterways: this is not a state of peace. This is a state of war. Any of us who are against the War on Terror are by the same extension against the state of war. We are the opponents of a highly policed state whose police and military are interchangeable, a state which in order to function relies on the threat of, or actual, military punishment. If we are against this state, then the state is against us, backed up by all its military might.

So where does this leave those of us preparing to protest at APEC? APEC and other summit protests will not, on their own, create our desired alternatives. Yet confronting the state allows us to gather our collective strength. It provides a space for us to listen and communicate with each other, to nurture our ideas and feelings in ways that allows us to realise our power and our strengths. Importantly, we should seek to address our fear and uncertainty about resistance in this climate of heightened police repression. What we need to be doing is taking care of ourselves and each other, so that our fear and paranoia does not paralyse us – because that exactly the result that the state wishes to achieve.

When organizing for APEC and struggles beyond we need to look toward what we can gain from these moments of resistance and how they can build upon our strength. For these confrontations, are not singular acts of resistance, but spaces to educate and be educated. Times where we can seek to develop our ability to communicate, our level of adaptability, and our knowledge and willingness to listen and change.

More than ever, there is a need to broaden militancy: to neither retreat into separate, secret groups nor to retreat into compliance. Being safe and successful in our defiance will rely on strength of numbers, however we choose to act – but people must be invited honestly. This means not blaming the world's problems on one evil man from far away. And it means not pretending that it is our responsibility to ensure a peaceful protest in a police state – or that it is even possible for us to do so. It also means being honest about fear. Fear is not just something we defy – it is something we feel. We are scared, but together we can be brave.

In solidarity,

Mutiny Collective
(mutineers@graffiti.net)

August 2007

* from
'Auroras of the Zapatistas'
- midnight notes

8

RETHINKING CLASS COMPOSITION ANALYSIS IN LIGHT OF THE ZAPATISTAS

MONTY NEILL[1]

HOW CAN THE planetary working class stop the capitalist machine? As capital enters its sixth century of increasing world domination, this should be the central question. If those who work in the realms of theory and analysis are to make a useful contribution toward an answer, they must understand not merely capital, but more importantly, the nature and shape of the working class, in order to overcome capital and create new societies.

My contribution to answering this question has relied in part on a body of work which emerged primarily in Italy in the 1960s and '70s. A theory of "class composition" was a significant element of that work.[2] In this piece, I revisit this theory in order to criticize and extend it in light of my understanding of the Zapatistas, in particular, and in general of anti-capitalist struggles not directly or entirely derived from the European factory-based proletarian movements of the past two centuries.

To me, the Zapatistas represent not only a powerful moment against capital, but also a challenge to many of those who have not been able to understand the nature of their struggle. Ironically, among them are many who have intellectual roots in the same theories of class composition as I have.

A quick summary of class composition analysis as it emerged in Italy is as follows: the working class strategies of the twentieth century typically had at their core, as leading subject, a particular class sector. In the struggles of the post-WWI period, the "mass worker" of the industrial factory acted as the "vanguard" of the class.[3] These workers put capitalist planning into crisis by blocking an accumulation process that was largely based on their work. A class vanguard gathers the rest of the class around it as a focus of demands and struggles, because other social sectors, such as schools and medical care, are modeled on the factory. That is, the power of the industrial workers resides simultaneously in their strategic position in production and in their role as the model for general social reproduction.[4]

By the late 1960's, the class struggles against the various basic "deals" around the planet were simultaneously putting those deals into crisis and forming a cycle of struggles.[5] However, the roles played by the apparent vanguards were not what they appeared. For example, even within the Keynesian-Fordist "deals" and social-productive structures which dominated western Europe and the U.S., a focus on the mass factory workers ignores the struggles of black people against apartheid, and the struggles of women against the unpaid labor of reproducing the work force for capital and their subordination to men (Dalla Costa and James, 1975). The concept of a class vanguard is therefore problematic.

Vanguardism ignores the divisions within the class or attempts to overcome those divisions by asserting the primacy of some sectors. The conception of the vanguard is that these key sectors can impose a unity on other sectors of the class through a resistance to capital that promises to benefit the non-vanguard sectors. However, this unity papers over contradictions that actually prevent the unity from withstanding capital's counterattacks.[6]

Ignoring the multiple forms of working class power within the complexity of the division of labor induces an overestimation of the structural power of the apparent vanguard sector, not so much of its ability to provoke a crisis of capital, but more importantly of its ability to resolve the crisis in favor of the working class and of its capacity to initiate successfully a post-capitalist society. The capitalist division of labor fragments the class, producing within each sector a partiality that renders the sector inadequate as a basis for constructing a new society. Because capital modeled society on the factory (hence, the "social factory"; see note 2), this vanguardism proposes a unified post-capitalist society, but such a society may owe more to capitalism than to anti-capitalism, precisely because its model is the capitalist factory.

The Zapatista experience critiques vanguardism and provides a strategy to begin reconstructing society out of the fragments of the division of labor. It refuses the vanguardism not only of the party but also of any class sectors. It takes the position that everyone is a vanguard when they struggle against capital and for a new, non-exploitative society. It does not, in this coming together of oppositions, presume a homogenous post-capitalist society or "one" society.[7]

Class composition analysis developed in an effort to theoretically locate the potential or actual class vanguard. If we reject the conception of the vanguard, then why should we return to a discussion of class composition? If analysis and theory are to play a useful role in overcoming capitalism, theorists need to describe the dynamically changing class composition on a world scale as well as in its many particulars, looking for the material and social bases of anti-capitalism and post-capitalism; that is, they must conduct an analysis of class composition not in order to locate a new vanguard, but to help the many class sectors come together against capital. This assumes that a richer understanding and self-reflection will help the struggle.

My position is that there is one planetary working class, but it remains divided in the ways in which it is internally organized and also externally confronts capital. There is no single vanguard class sector; many sectors form their own vanguards where they are fighting capitalism. In any particular struggle, there may be a leading sector around which the struggle coalesces. Class composition remains a useful tool for analyzing situations and struggles, but it must be freed of its too-narrow beginnings.

Alquati on Class Composition

Romano Alquati's *The Network of Struggles in Italy* (circa the late 1960s) will serve to focus this critique of class-composition analysis. He argued that working class struggles comprise a network, not just regionally or nationally, but even on the international level. A network is the unity of struggles in both their *vertical* and *horizontal* articulations. The vertical articulation locates the point within the capitalist circuit of production/reproduction at which the struggle occurs; the horizontal articulation describes the spatial distribution and linkages. This combined vertical-horizontal articulation of struggles pivots around decisive points of interconnection: *nodal points*.

Nodes, points of connection within the network, may be strategically hierarchized, including internationally. They will represent the points of advanced mass struggles. However, there is no simple (mechanical) correspondence on the vertical plane alone: that is, there is no direct equivalence between the level of capitalist production and the avant garde of mass struggles of the class.

For Alquati, the *political* composition of the class cannot be deduced from its *technical* composition (the kinds of work done with various kinds of technology in various specific productive relations). Rather, technical composition reflects previous political compositions (struggles and deals shaping the development of capitalism, locally and on a world scale); and political recomposition of the working class must both use and subvert the technical composition of capital, that is, move within and attack all the circuits of capital.

As with 1968, cycles of struggles transform the network of struggles, both vertically and horizontally, thereby recomposing the class (see also *Zerowork*, 1975). Thus, class *recomposition* is the dynamic development of the class through struggle in given or changing conditions of capitalist deployment of labor power. Recomposition is not a mechanical reflection of the current capitalist articulation of labor power. Even if the recomposition makes political use of the objective articulation (the value composition and productive structures of capital), the class' recomposition dynamically transcends the static and objective differences between the technological levels and the levels of exploitation of living labor within the working class, e.g., the ratio of workers in different branches of industry and agriculture. It transcends the hierarchies of capitalist work and wages embodied in the working class.

The network of struggles may be conceptualized as the dynamic process of *circulation* (communication) *of struggles*, in which struggles are homogenized within the broad zones of capitalist production of given types of labor power (e.g., European zone). The late '60s was a period of international recomposition, both vertically and horizontally, of the working class (c.f., *Zerowork*, 1975). That is, the working class politically recomposed itself through the process of struggle (see also, Caffentzis, this volume).

The factory workers working in the centers of power and command of international capital, Alquati argued, were the apex of the international struggle. At the lowest level were the mass struggles of the proletariat in zones still struggling to attain the introduction of specifically capitalist forms of production and accumulation. International nodes, points of the maximum accumulation of information concerning struggles, are generally the points of maximum massification and greatest direct combination of different moments of the anti-capitalist struggle. This generally occurs at the points of greatest physical concentration of different massified masses of labor-power, as in European or U.S. leading productive centers (now, we might conclude, expanded to other locales as well, such as South Korea). But of no less strategic importance to the working class is the utilization of the integration of the capitalist circuit, as the accumulation of information is very dense within the international network of the large international capitalist groups. At these points of massification will be found the propelling forces of working class struggles.

Decomposition of the working class occurs when capital defeats the working class and imposes its own recomposition (c.f., *Zerowork*, 1975). Technology is often central to this, as has been known since at least Marx (1967), but so are law, military/police action, and state economic policies such as wage policies or economic supports for the unwaged or low-waged. During successful capitalist offensives, capital turns struggles into modes of accumulation, decomposes working class organization or anti-capitalism, creates new technologies in its image, and expands its spheres of domination both geographically and socially.[8]

A Critique of Alquati

We critique this decades-old piece from an important comrade in order to make a few points about class-composition analysis. First, the analysis must transcend the "workerism" from which it sprang, as in fact it has in understanding the capitalist productivity of "women's work" and in understanding the essential roles played in the accumulation process by the working class, (starting with women) in so-called "underdeveloped" areas (Dalla Costa and James, 1975; Caffentzis, 1990; Mies, Bennholdt-Thomsen & Werlhof, 1988). Still, class composition discussions often appear to be limited to the founding conceptualizations, and thus limited to their founding workerism.[9]

Second, the tie to capitalist technical composition — to workers in key industries, be they auto or computer or "service" — poses a complex problem. As Alquati says, such workers occupy pivotal places in major locales of capitalist production, and as such can wreak havoc on capitalist planning and accumulation. Yet, as he notes, there is no simple mechanical relationship between the technical composition of capital and the political power of the workers employed by capital of any given technical composition. As we know, workers working at the lowest levels of technical composition of capital have historically been among the most powerful protagonists of working-class struggle against capital.

Affirming the power of the Zapatistas, Holloway (1998b) asks, "Anyway, which does more 'damage to capital' — a prolonged strike by industrial workers or a rebellion in the jungles of Mexico which stirs up again the idea of revolution and the dream of a different type of society?" In short, we do not agree with Alquati's concept, clearly still held by many descendants of Italian autonomist theorists (e.g., Wildcat, 1997), that the lowest level of anti-capitalist struggle is found in the zones struggling to obtain specifically capitalist forms of production. Alquati's formulation is faulty both as to the level of power found in such relatively less-capitalistically-organized spaces and as to whether the struggles in those spaces must lead to capitalist development — even in order to gain power against capital. This simultaneously critiques a conception of capitalist accumulation and a conception of class struggle.

Third, Alquati's piece seems to focus on the vertical articulation and gives less attention to the horizontal. By "spatial distribution and linkages," it would appear he means such things as connections across sectors of production or across nations or continents. Thus, for example, a struggle gains power as either or both kinds of connections are strengthened, forming the horizontal axis of networks of struggle.

Fourth, even taken together, the vertical and horizontal articulations do not allow a sufficient understanding of the powerful "social sector" struggles that emerged in the 1960s and '70s: the struggles of women, people of color, immigrants, and the national-liberation struggles of the "Third World." These struggles, for Alquati (at least in the late 1960s) as for many others to this day, would appear to come from outside of working-class struggles.

For us, however, the working class includes diverse and complexly interacting sectors. "Social struggles" are in the main working class struggles, but as happens with unions and political parties of the industrial working class as well, they often are also struggles for arranging a deal within capital and thus often take an accommodationist, even capitalist form. (Just to note, women, people of color, etc., are often involved powerfully in struggles at their paid workplaces as well as in the "social" spheres.)

In terms of the goals of struggle, a class composition analysis that does not take account of social struggles is an analysis of clearly limited usefulness for a class that reorganizes not only its relationships to work but all its social relationships. In terms of a more empirical assessment of class power and struggles, the vertical and horizontal articulations of the working class as defined by Alquati cannot sufficiently capture the potential power of the class either against capital or for itself. Even while it negates the Leninist separation of politics from economics, Alquati's formulation continues to separate and to one-sidedly prize the "economic" over the "social," implicitly perpetuating the mechanistic "base" — "superstructure" concept Marx (1970) briefly propagated with historically unfortunate results.[10]

Let me be clear: I do not argue that the "factory" and the "mass worker" are not relevant. I argue that to see other struggles solely through the prism of the factory and the factory struggles is to fail to see the power of these other struggles, which are not just adjuncts to the factory. The factory is fundamental to capital, not only as a locale for intense extraction of surplus value, but also as a model for other structures and institutions of capital: the school, the office, the prison, in some ways even the family (though the patriarchal family is itself a model for some manifestations of the capitalist factory). Thus, not only do struggles in the factory attack often-critical points of accumulation, understanding the struggle against the factory in the factory is one basic element for understanding struggles against the factory in the school, office and home.[11]

The problem is seeing the factory as the only fundamental node of capitalist accumulation and of anti-capitalism. Women's struggles have revealed the home and the sphere of reproduction to be also fundamental to capitalist accumulation. A multiplicity of struggles over decades has revealed how powerful are struggles in what has variously been labeled the "periphery" or the "Third World" — and how central to capital is this "periphery." In both cases, the organization of exploitation and the resistance to it cannot be understood in terms of or reduced to the factory model. Put in other terms, the factory in its various manifestations is essential and indispensable to understanding capital and the struggle against capital, but it is not the only thing that is essential and indispensable. Thus, those who seek anti-capitalist revolution must not wear blinkers that hinder their seeing how capitalism functions on a planetary level and how revolution against capital emerges in different forms and places.

Learning from the Zapatistas

There is no purity in the Zapatistas' methods, and thus methodological purists are appalled. They appear as a mix of social democracy, Leninism, anarchism, Central American and Mexican revolutionary traditions (including some nationalism), what remains of indigenous communalism centuries after the Spanish conquest (and before that the Mayan states), and the long history of Mayan struggles against Mexico and against world capitalism. Just as capital uses all its history in reorganizing its structures to keep the working class divided, off balance and "decomposed," the EZLN method proposes an evolving mix to bring the class together in progressively higher levels of struggle against capital.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that there are no principles behind the methodological mix. The EZLN has asserted foremost a radical participatory democracy.[12] Thus, when an agreement was negotiated with the Mexican state in 1994, the agreement was submitted to the Zapatista communities for ratification and was rejected. It may be that the EZLN itself pushed for rejection of the deal it negotiated, but even so it seems clear that there was a widespread consultation. The EZLN has said it was not a decision of the military leadership to launch the January 1, 1994, assault, but a decision of the people. (Having seen Zapatista villages in Chiapas, it is readily clear that anyone who wishes to rejoin the state-PRI side can easily do so, and will likely be well-paid, albeit only briefly, for doing so.)

The meaning of this democracy shows up in several ways. First, the EZLN has chosen not to become a political party to contest for state power by elections or to proclaim themselves a vanguard looking to seize the state. While they have created alliances with political parties, particularly with the social democratic PRD, it is probably most useful to understand these alliances in the context of attempting to construct a strategy that simultaneously increases the likelihood of survival of the EZLN, and more importantly the people and communities, and hastens the unity of 'civil society' against neoliberalism. (See Esteva, 1999 for a discussion of "civil society" in the Mexican context, which is not the same use of the term as emerged in Eastern Europe or the U.S.)

The radical democratic solution can be seen also in the words of a letter from Marcos to the EPR, the People's Revolutionary Army, a guerrilla group which has a focoist conception of sparking revolution through its own military action. Said Marcos, "What we seek, what we need, is that all those people without a party and organization make agreements about what they want and do not want in order to become organized to achieve it (preferably through civil and peaceful means), not to take power, but to exercise it." Whether, as Marcos has put it, Mexican "civil society" can in fact initiate the revolution

which leads to the revolution, as the Zapatistas hope and struggle to create, remains to be seen, but it is a pluralistic, diverse and democratic approach to revolution.[13]

The Zapatistas do have a strategy of revolution: that different sectors will reach agreements and act on them, initiating a chain of events which proceeds through the collapse of the hegemony of the PRI, the ruling party, which is the "revolution to initiate the revolution," and thence on to the construction of a new society. It also seems clear that the EZLN does not yet know how to do this, they too are learning as they walk, but Zapatistas know that the old methods have failed and that new ones must be developed.[14]

We read Marcos as saying that contrary to the long-established conception of the goal of the left as seizing state power in order to build "socialism" (and ultimately communism), the EZLN is proposing that people organize themselves to exercise power, that is, to live "socialism/communism" at least in political terms and, in time, economically. In doing so, we can conceive the "withering away" of the state as a process of class struggle through the self-organization of the working class, including the overcoming of its internal contradictions (such as wage hierarchy, race, and gender). It is, perhaps, that "civil society" can withdraw from the state, leaving a useless shell which will collapse. Here it is worth recalling that this conception of civil society emerged after the Mexico City earthquake when "society" took care of itself because the state was simply an impediment to rebuilding (see Midnight Notes, 1988 and Esteva 1999). Rather than the free association of the producers being an end state, it is a current political activity of the working class against capital. The famous ends and means dichotomy is overcome because the means are the ends. "From the people [through the party] to the people," the Maoist line, ceases to have an intermediary party that is actually the state in embryo.

In a sense then, the fusion of Mexican Marxism and indigenous communism leads to a proposal to move directly to post-capitalist communism. This idea has been proposed before, for example by Amilcar Cabral (1969), who found that the most resolute anti-colonialist groups in Guinea-Bissau were those whose social structures and relations were the most communist and had the least hierarchy and lacked a state or state-in-embryo. The idea of an African road to socialism that built on communal land ownership and indigenous pre-capitalist social organizations was widely discussed in the 1960s and '70s. The sway of state socialism, however, was then too dominant for this road to be widely pursued in practice; now capital is working extremely hard to eliminate the possibility of Africans turning to that previously missed road.

The question of Mayan "original communism" has begun to spark debate about the extent of such communism and its meaning. Anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggles in Chiapas and among indigenous people in Mexico have a history of half a millennium. These struggles cannot be reduced to the categories derived from the struggles of the European working class, including those that have developed further in Africa, Asia and Latin America. From outside, we can note the incorporation of that history, its categories and language, in the words of Marcos and the Zapatista commandantes. But to those outside, this history is mostly unwritten and substantially invisible, though this is beginning to change (c.f., Burgos-Debray, 1984; *Abya Yala News*). Bringing together two substantially distinct histories of anti-capitalism opens ground for new theory and practice, making the potential struggle richer, but simultaneously posing new problems and complexities.

After the fall of the Paris Commune, Marx turned his attention to a variety of issues concerning pre-capitalist social structures, including issues of gender. His writings on these themes were collected as *The Ethnographic Notebooks* (Rosemont, n.d.; Shanin, 1983). Our point here is that Marx was considering ideas that appear to contradict the "Marxist" postulate according to which capitalism is "progressive," that people around the world will have to undergo proletarianization in order to subsequently overcome capitalism, and that the working class created by capitalism is the sole source of positive anti-capitalism. He was exploring other means of understanding and attacking capitalism, thus undermining his own Eurocentrism.

This discussion poses a clear challenge to "workerism," including the original class composition analysis, which in its own way appears to reproduce the Stalinist "stages of history" argument, as it assumes in effect that capitalism is the *necessary* precursor to communism (under Stalinism, of course, "socialism" as the development of the productive forces prepares for communism). This line of thinking connects to Marx, who argued that freedom necessarily requires the productive capacity to free humans from onerous and time-consuming manual labor, and that such productive capacity necessarily must exist in order for communism to be established. It is precisely this conception that Marx himself began to challenge and which comes again to us at the end of the twentieth century from a variety of struggles, including quite prominently that of the Zapatistas.

In its critique of Holloway, Wildcat (1997) cites Marx's (1959) famous discussion of the "realm of freedom," which "begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases, thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production... Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control." By now, this conversation should be informed powerfully by the ecological and indigenous movements' challenge to "bringing nature under control." Some feminisms also challenge this version of the reduction of "work" as it ignores the reproduction of humans and implies (at the least) that people cannot find freedom in this realm of human activity. I suggest a rethinking that looks both at freedom beyond onerous labor and at freedom in recognizing necessity (reproduction and nature) and changing one's relations with other humans and with nature.

If the direct leap from pre-capitalist communism to post-capitalist communism may not be possible for most of humanity, living in conditions far removed from the presence of indigenous people's original communism, it is still true that more than half of humanity lives quite directly on the land or has access to the land — mostly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but also substantially even in Russia and other former Soviet states. If one is to think of different roads to communism, many such roads must start from the land (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Esteva, "Indigenous Autonomy," this volume).

The issue of the form or extent of pre-capitalist communism is, unlike for the EZLN, a far less immediately practical issue for those of us living in urbanized metropoli — we *apparently* have no such social relations which could be a source of anti-capitalist power and of developing communism. But it would be a mistake to view the issues posed as therefore not relevant.

The Nature of Anti-capitalism

We might envision capital as a power grid overlaid on a vast nebula, with the working class as that nebula.[15] Workers are captured by and in some ways defined by the grid, the multifold structures and processes of accumulation. That is the sphere of exploitation. However, the nebula is life: capital must draw on it and cannot survive without it, but the workers have life and can survive without the grid. This is the sphere of everyday life, however corrupted and influenced by capital which seeks to control it and tap its energy and creativity. But no matter how controlling, capital cannot *be* everyday life, which thus remains a great reservoir of energy against capital. This is in some ways more visible when, as with the Zapatistas, everyday life incorporates social structures and relations that pre-date capital and have visible anti-capitalist potential. But such potential is everywhere — though being everywhere is no guarantee it will be mobilized against capital.

Let me put this just a bit more formally (c.f., Caffentzis, 1997). Capital creates identity via work and commodities. Wage workers sell their labor power and purchase consumer products, thereby creating identities as workers and consumers. Refusal and resistance move in all these circuits. It is only because workers can resist and refuse that they have the ability to negotiate to sell their labor power. If they have no autonomous space, if they are fully capital, they cannot negotiate and therefore cannot sell their labor power.

This is another way of saying that capital depends on the life energy of the working class — but that life energy cannot be reduced to capital nor be fully possessed by capital.[16] As capital attempts to control all aspects of life, the logical end of capitalist success would be a pure machine — as science fiction writers often suggest — including a bio-engineered machine assembled largely out of human genes.

It is the space outside of capital, the space of human life not defined by capital even if substantially controlled by capital, that is the fundamental source of power against capital as well as the basic source of capital itself. That is, working class struggles necessarily come also from outside the working class' existence as actual or latent labor power and move not only within the circuits of capital but also extend or create spaces outside of capitalist circuits.

This point increasingly is being explored. On the one side, the analysis of the creation of the capitalist body and mind has long been developed. Arguably, this capitalist tendency to control, define and produce the human body has intensified over the centuries, and the computer is being used to intensify it still further (c.f., Midnight Notes, 1982; Neill, 1995), as is biotechnology. In this, the human is fragmented, decomposed, constructed as labor power, and denied humanity.

John Holloway (1998a) suggests that the fundamental contribution of the Zapatistas is to recompose the human through the assertion of "dignity." They claim that revolution starts not from capitalism, but from "dignity." He also insists on the emphasis of revolution as process, not product, arguing that "communism is not something we move towards, but something that we struggle to invent... The struggle, as [the Zapatistas] put it, is the struggle to convert 'dignity and rebellion into freedom and dignity': dignity is the means, dignity the end, there is no distinction" (internet communication, Feb. 2, 1997).

Laura Fiocco, in a similar vein, says that democratic behavior becomes communist when its central purpose is to "produce the collective subject (where we can feel the power and love of being together). If we start from here, to enlarge the field of solidarity means to enlarge the collective subject. But this process is not just a quantitative enlargement, it is a relocation of the field of struggle to a higher level. The new subject — constituted in this process — produces its own goals which *can't* be thought before its constitution" (internet communication, Jan. 29, 1997).

These arguments do run the risk of discarding entirely an understanding of structures. One can analyze structures and recognize that the structures of social relations must be revolutionized without being a "structuralist," and I suggest it is inadequate to only consider fluid subjectivities developing their being collectively. The abandonment of considering social structures (which I see in Holloway, 1998a) also runs the risk of not thinking about such things as relations of production or ownership, that is, of class as materially constituted: everything becomes collapsed into "dignity." (In this, the critique of Holloway by Wildcat, 1997, has some cogency.) Clearly, however, exploring these aspects continues to be correct in response to "structure-only" variants of Marxism, as well as to the "workerist" variants.

I suggest that while the communist movement must create its future through its struggles, including the creation of new social structures, it is also true that glimmerings and ideas of the future, of what is desirable and could be made, continuously infuse struggles and provide some sense of a goal. If life is anti-capitalist (if only because capital must seek to control and confine life, and thus to immiserate and alienate it and very potentially to exterminate it, in order to ensure accumulation), then social struggles asserting life have anti-capitalist energy, aspects and possibilities. (As always, however, capital seeks to channel the energy into its productivity. Thus, for example, the struggle against housework as the production and reproduction of labor power can become work in restaurants and day care centers precisely to (re)produce labor power while undermining the power of the refusal of housework.)

In sum, since the class struggle to cease to be proletarian necessarily and fundamentally rests on resistance to capital, which imposed proletarianization on humans, the analytical framework developed by Alquati and his comrades is valuable because it helps us understand some very important aspects of the struggle. But it needs both correction and radical expansion, and the two are related: Correction in understanding better the planetary composition of capitalist accumulation and thus of the working class as a whole (i.e., not limited to the "factory"); and expansion, to understand the capitalist machine as a vampiric and parasitic structure growing out of life, but not itself living, while the working class has life based on its being outside of work as well as being "living labor," and that this life and its growth, not only in its immediate resistance to capitalist particulars, is the basis of revolution.

Building Post-capitalist Society within Capitalism

The working class cannot beat capital only with resistance and opposition. One should keep in mind Marx' observation that the new society emerges from the womb of the old and try to protect and hasten the development of the embryo — though we should not assume a single world society.

Elements of post-capitalism exist in many places. Most will be isolated or absorbed, sometimes crushed, but mostly used as fuel for accumulation. This does not mean we should simply dismiss them: their limitations speak to the limitations of the overall class struggle, which needs to incorporate and build on these struggles.

Struggles reveal not only opposition to capital and weaknesses of capital, but elements of post-capitalism. As is well-known, strikes and other working class battles often reveal much of possible post-capitalist relations, revealed through solidarity, the joys of having time away from work, and new relations among women and men, workplace and community (c.f., Riker, 1990). Yet having been thrown up so quickly, albeit necessarily rooted in various actual experiences of the class preceding the moments of struggle, they seem ephemeral. Rather than being based on regular daily life, they demand exceptional moments to survive; thus, unless the exceptional moment lasts and becomes daily life, the social relations of post-capitalism that are based on those moments are soon submerged in the reassertion of capitalist existence.

An alternate strategy to expecting the working class to throw up its post-capitalist possibilities in the heat of anti-capitalist battle is the rather deliberate constructing of alternative institutions or relationships within the larger current society, sometimes in the hope of

living outside of capital, sometimes in the hope of creating better social arrangements within capital. The materialist critique of such efforts is usually that they are "utopian," rooted in the desires of a limited class sector and not generalizable; that is, not having an adequate material basis or not adequately reflecting needs and desires of enough of the class. Many efforts quickly cease to be anti-capitalist and become simply small deals within capital or spurs to new schemes of capitalist development — as anti-capitalism, they too are ephemeral.

If struggles against capital are in themselves insufficient for creating something new, attempting to create the new while ignoring the world capitalist system will merely produce new commodities or pools of labor for capital. That is, the working class must simultaneously attack capital and create its own society/societies. (P. M., 1985, coined the term "substruction" to indicate the need to simultaneously subvert the old and construct the new.)

Within the strategies of wage-based anti-capitalism of the 1960s and 70s, there was an understanding that gaining a sufficient wage enabled not only an expanded resistance to waged work, but also the possibility of constructing different social relations within the time and space provided by this wage (Neill, *et al.*, 1997). Thus, for example, from wages for housework to wages *against* housework, in which it was understood that a further development of struggle presumed the development of social relations among women that could occur within the relatively liberated time and space of the higher wage (Federici, 1975). This is analogous to the idea of the liberated zone in which new social relationships can develop (c.f., Hinton, 1966). The Zapatistas also argue for such zones, the Zapatista communities, in which new relations are being developed, relations which can form the basis for further struggle against capital and a further deepening and widening of the new society.

Towards the New Commons

This critique of class composition analysis is directed at what it leaves out, not at what it includes — though as a result, what is included becomes problematic for *how* it is included.[17] In effect, it argues there is but one road to revolution, and it lies through capitalist development. Thus, intentionally or nor, it argues that capital is progressive. Others now argue that capital not only is not progressive, it is the destruction of humanity.

Those who seek the end of capitalism seem now to face some polarities. First, revolution emerging from the ongoing struggles of workers, especially in factories, creating new social relations in and through their struggles; or revolution consciously and deliberately created as new social and productive relations built to be outside of capitalism. Second, revolution as seizing and using the means of production, which implies capitalism as the precondition of communism; revolution as a negation of most of those means of production as necessarily destructive to human and other life, which implies capitalism as an historical dead end that cannot presage communism because of how it conditions human relations and relations with nature. Can the working class resolve these polarities, overcome them into a new synthesis — suggesting they are inter-penetrating, intertwined aspects of a complex common and uncommon shared existence as a working class on a planet with finite material resources?

To the second: It seems increasingly clear not only that capitalist development cannot sustain human life and even endangers our species existence, but also that the eradication of capitalism cannot be based on a more rational use of the existing means of production or even minor adjustments of the productive apparatus, as has been claimed in most variants of Marxism. The role of technology and the use of energy resources, for example, must be re-thought in light of the growing knowledge of their impact on the planet's ecology (c.f., Sarkar, 1999). But that is beyond the scope of this piece. Here, we focus on the first of the polarities.

Capital cannot be defeated without both opposition and creation. Both can take many forms, depending on the particular circumstances in which people find themselves. For example, if there are places where it is more likely that people are able to use their control over land to create non-capitalist social spaces, that strength inevitably limits capitalism and increases the likelihood of a profits squeeze, pushing capital to exploit more intensely those whom it can control. Clearly, as the case of Africa shows, capital is not eager to allow any sizeable spaces to escape control, and thus will always mobilize to prevent such escapes. This scenario suggests traditional "support movement" activity in, for example, the U.S. and western Europe, although it should not be sneezed at, is inadequate and inevitably fails to see the commonality of both problem and solution. To see different possibilities and particularities in struggle, to grasp the complex diversity of the class in its composition and political recomposition is not to treat different particularities as being inside or outside of the class struggle against capital.

The EZLN enables a revisiting of history. As capital now uses all its history to continuously "decompose" the working class, so the visible experience of the EZLN demonstrates that we need to reconsider the history of struggles around the planet over a long time span. The EZLN looks in part to the pre-capitalist communalism of the indigenous people — but not that alone. In fact, the composition of the EZLN communities is quite complex, involving not only indigenous people who have few experiences beyond their communities, but indigenous workers who work on large farms, or building dams, in rural and urban areas. Thus, the mixing of the traditions of struggle includes not only the Mexican Marxists from Mexico City who moved to Chiapas in the 1980s and the rural indigenous anti-capitalism of half a millennium, but also the experiences with more modern local capitalism. As Collier (1994) shows, the participants in the EZLN are often themselves relatively recent migrants within Chiapas (see also King and Villanueva, 1998; and Lorenzano, 1998).

The point is not to duplicate what the Zapatistas have done (which anyway cannot be done) or to select one historical strategy and argue for it, but to learn to create new proletarian combinations. While not all sectors of the world's working class look directly to a living continuation of the social structures of original communism, all sectors can find their non-capitalist spaces and build further on them.

The essence of capitalism is creating a working class (the accumulation of living labor), producing workers and social relations conducive to work for capital. The struggle against work is clearly a struggle against surplus value as the alienated product of exploited labor used to support the expansion of capitalist social relations. It is also a struggle against the unnecessary expenditure of human labor in the production of use-values, against the production of use-values that are of use only within the social construct of capital. It is also about the reorganization of time so that "work" is not reduced to inhuman efficiency but is defined by human needs. And it is about changing the relations and values that dominate society. Thus, the fundamental questions of the economy are social and political, not "economic." This is true both within capitalism and after capitalism, as the working class creates multiple new commons fitting varying circumstances and desires.

Capital has from its start sought to enclose all commons. From colonization to slavery, from factory work to housework, from any activity to the deepest thoughts and feelings, the history of capital is its extension into the human commons. In fighting what has been called the "new enclosures" (Midnight Notes, 1990), the working class is not seeking only to defend what human commons remains from the past or what commons workers' struggles created under variants of twentieth-century "socialism," but also to reassert, redefine, and extend the commons, to create a multiplicity of mutually supportive new commons (see Midnight Notes, 1997).

Under capital, work, be it waged in the factory or office, unwaged in home or school or prison, indirectly waged in small farming and selling, is the antithesis of the commons, however much capital fosters cooperation to spur production. Human relations remain within and outside these circuits, but capital deforms and channels them.

From these observations, I can draw several conclusions. First, the struggle against capital and for humanity exists in all social relations and circuits. Thus a strategy must consider the relationships among all the circuits and how to strengthen them against capital. Second, since the essence of capital is the creation of work, the struggle against work must be understood as central. This struggle is centuries, even millennia old. It predates capital and continues throughout capitalism. The defeat of working class strategies that sought to overcome the socialist deals of the twentieth century through the struggle against work does not signal the end of the struggle against work. Rather, it signals that the working class must rethink itself and recreate itself through struggles. (This means, as discussed above, clear thinking about "work" and what should be meant by that term, both as social relations and as material/immaterial production.) The struggle against work, and thus against all forms of exploitative hierarchies within the class, circulates through all the circuits of life in and outside of capital, resisting capital and creating new social forms within capital. It is the struggle for the commons.

A new working class strategy will develop through multiple aspects of struggle and practice. If theory is to be an element of struggle, it must live in the interplay between analyzing struggles and analyzing capital. We are arguing for a deliberate impurity of method in theory and practice, for simultaneous analyses postulating either no vanguard or multiple vanguards, for listening to the particulars of struggles to hear both the anti-capitalism and the post-capitalism (commons-ism or communism) that might exist, for pushing to make all kinds of new circuits of struggle.

To move ahead, I suggest some basic work. I recognize some of it is now being done, perhaps much of it, as networks of communication slowly develop.

1. Exchanging knowledge (not just "information") about how new class political recompositions are emerging or trying to emerge in particular struggles.
2. Proposing strategies as to how such emerging recompositions can deepen or can interact with other class forces in mutually reinforcing ways. This involves listening to and watching the struggles, but also participating in them.
3. Analyzing how such recompositions or suggested strategies might level existing class hierarchies or capitalist relations within the working class, keeping in mind the limitations we necessarily have as products of a capitalist world division of labor.
4. Using the analysis of capital's strategies and development to learn to avoid capitalist traps.
5. Strengthening an analysis of capital that actually helps identify capital's weaknesses and how best to resist capitalism.
6. Analyzing anti-capitalist struggles from ecological and feminist perspectives.
7. Identifying forms of immediate political organization that do not reproduce the capitalist division of labor. Since it seems highly evident that no one person can keep up even in a cursory manner with all the aspects of struggle, sharing that work though political organizations is necessary, as is developing supportive and cooperative relations among many organizations.
8. Translating as well as developing a new political language, so we can communicate more clearly.

This work does not create struggles or bring class sectors into mutual support. However, there is a use for a revised and expanded class-composition analysis for people engaged in struggle.

This work needs to be done in light of the Zapatistas. To me, this means a few essential things. The EZLN has brought to light, or created, new things about the world struggle against capitalism. To do the same in other places requires patience and humility. Anti-capitalist activists cannot easily come to conclusions; the world situation is too complex, with too many new factors; we must not quickly dismiss that which may have an appearance that does not fit a preconception of what is "revolutionary." Those of us in the U.S. and Europe (and perhaps elsewhere) must be wary of the "Eurocentrism" of reducing all struggles to the models derived from the struggles of the European working class.

Class composition suggests that the working class composes itself, makes itself and transcends itself, through struggle. We conclude that the Zapatistas, with whatever limitations and however uncertain their own immediate future, have furthered our hope that this process is in the making; they have given us some wisdom and have sparked new energy and creativity. We thus have a better possibility of navigating across and out of the desert of capitalism and into the time and space of the new commons.

Notes

[1] This article is revised from Part V of *Towards a New Commons*, by Monty Neill with George Caffentzis and Johnny Machete (1997), prepared for the second Intercontinental Encuentro against Neoliberalism and for Humanity, 1997. The entire original is posted on the Midnight Notes website: http://www.midnightnotes.org. Part I introduces the Zapatistas. Part II outlines a conception of working class strategies and "deals" of the second half of the twentieth century. Part III reflects on the Zapatista's strategies (some of which is incorporated into this piece). Part IV touches on three issues raised by the Zapatista struggle and the first Intercontinental Encuentro: localism, homogeneity, and networks.

[2] C.f., Baldi, 1972; Tronti, 1972; Bologna, 1972; *Zerowork*, 1975; Semiotext(e), 1980, for some of the key shorter works available in English.

[3] "Vanguard" here indicates who, within the working class, is most effective against the capitalists. It does not equate to "vanguard party," nor to "class consciousness." The vanguard is not simply the undifferentiated mass worker, but is analyzed as a sector within the mass worker, as I show in the discussion of Alquati, below. In searching analytically for the vanguard, one is also looking for the core revolutionary subject.

[4] See note 2.

[5] On class "deals," struggles putting capital into crisis, and cycles of struggles, c.f., Midnight Notes (1992), Neill, *et al.* (1997), *Zerowork* (1975), p.m. (1985).

[6] See Neill, *et al.* (1997), part II, "Strategies and Deals."

[7] See Esteva, "An Encounter of Discovery," in this volume. This social-cultural plurality was also proposed by p.m. (1985, 1995).

[8] Caffentzis (this volume) describes the "decomposition" of the U.S. working class under capital's response to the working-class offensives initiated in the '60s. For an example specific to the shipping industry, see Carlsson (1998).

[9] In their critique of Holloway's (1998a) then-in-draft chapter, "Dignity's Revolt," Wildcat (1997) refers to the importance of Alquati in particular for informing their thinking. Wildcat does not overcome the limitations of workerism.

[10] We might, however, think of the horizontal articulation as including the "space" of race, gender, etc.; c.f., Midnight Notes Collective (1981). Or, we might conceptualize three, not two dimensions, with the 'social' struggles as a third articulation interacting with the horizontal and the vertical. But we think both these approaches will not adequately describe class composition. Alquati's vertical and horizontal articulations must be relocated within a different conceptualization of the structure of capital and of class struggle.

[11] Here we include the computerized factory and social factory as falling within the trajectory of the factory in capitalism, though with many particular differences. This altered factory relationship is in turn becoming a model for schools and other social areas.

[12] In addition to Zapatista documents (1994), see Esteva (1999) and Holloway and Pelaez, eds. (1998).

[13] A reminder: the EZLN has not proposed themselves even as a model for Mexico, never mind the rest of the world. In the first Encuentro they called and hosted in Chiapas, they did not tell the participants what to do. Indeed, the Zapatistas only rarely participated in the actual discussions. Rather, they provided a space for dialogue and thought (see Neill, "Encounters," this issue). They sent, therefore, a message: think for yourselves, but let us also work together. The value of studying the Zapatista struggle is not to construct a "Zapatology," but to enable us to understand how they have developed a revolutionary project.

[14] From conversations in Mexico, it has become clear that there are criticisms of how the Zapatistas have realized this conception of revolution. It has been argued that they have allied too strongly with some sectors rather than others, especially the urban barrios and working poor. Even if accurate, this may be more a matter of the circumstances in which they find themselves than a matter of Zapatista preference. In any event, the critique itself operates within the concept of revolution proposed by the Zapatistas, and there seems to be little doubt concerning the enormous support

for and authority of the Zapatistas within these urban sectors.

[15] On the cover to *Computer State Notes* (*Midnight Notes* #5, 1982), we portrayed such a grid over a nebula.

[16] In *Towards the New Commons*, part IV (Neill, *et al.*, 1997), we note that capital must have access to diversity, but must reduce that diversity to a usable homogeneity to control it, while maintaining the diversity in a capitalist, hierarchical form in order to have productive energy (as discussed in Caffentzis, 1990). Workers, however, must develop a homogeneity with respect to capital that denies capital access to the energy found in difference (a unity of resistance), all the while recognizing diversity toward each other, much as biological diversity is a requisite for a healthy environment. Sarkar (1999), however, argues against this biological diversity metaphor.

[17] Alquati's piece is in fact titled *The Network of Struggles in **Italy*** (emphasis added). We have critiqued his work because his analysis of capital and class leads it toward a flawed perspective of struggles that are not occurring within the vanguard sphere as he conceives it. Nonetheless, it is potentially valuable to analyze the composition of the class involved in specific struggles — the dockers of Liverpool, teachers in Detroit, factory workers in Korea, the Zapatistas, etc., in order to better learn from those struggles and to support them. That is, our critique of Alquati is not that he helped develop a class-composition analysis to further particular kinds of struggles, but that he understood and located those struggles in a way that helped to perpetuate a narrow workerism.

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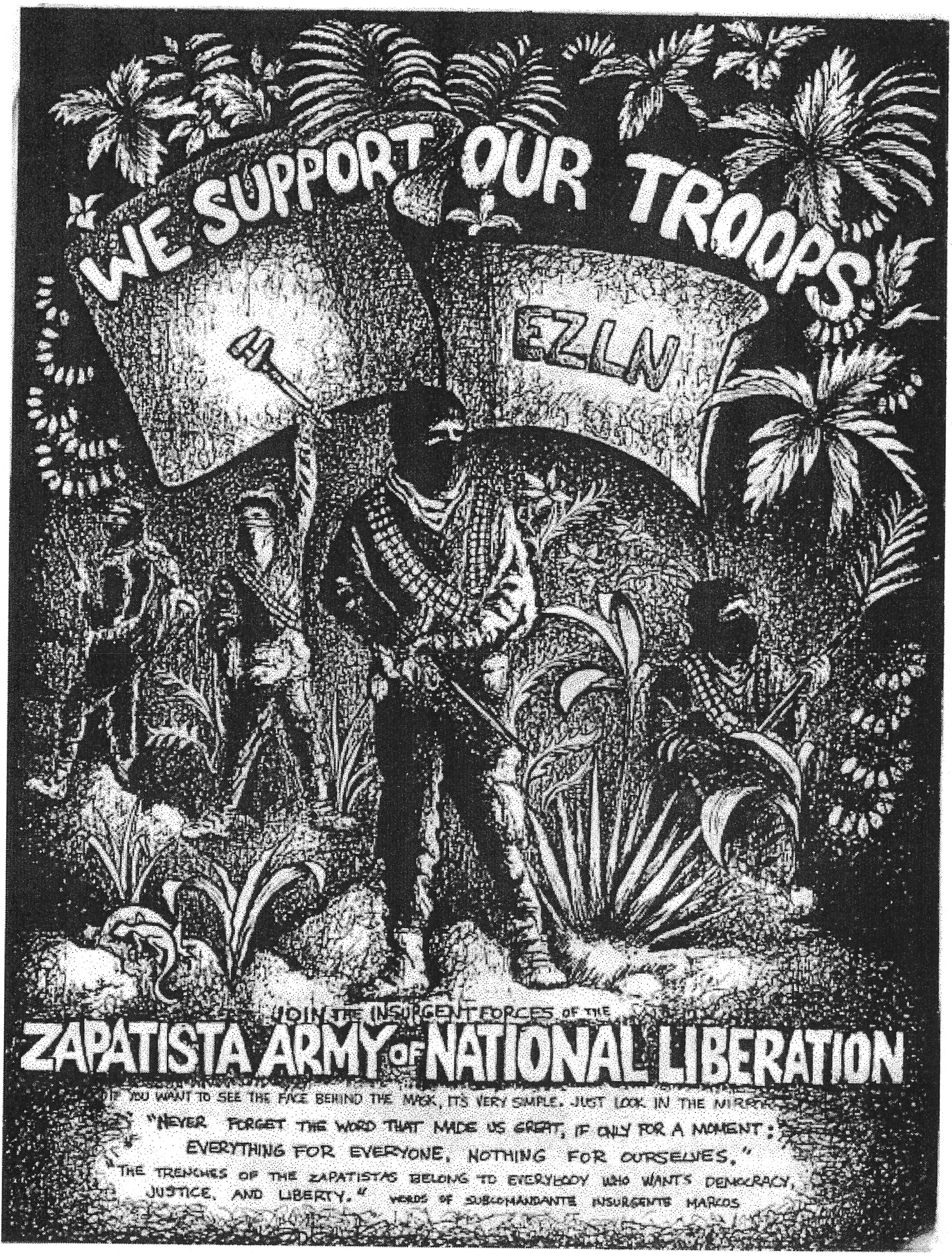

WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!
EZLN
JOIN THE INSURGENT FORCES OF THE
ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION
IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK, ITS VERY SIMPLE. JUST LOOK IN THE MIRROR.
"NEVER FORGET THE WORD THAT MADE US GREAT, IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT: EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE, NOTHING FOR OURSELVES."
"THE TRENCHES OF THE ZAPATISTAS BELONG TO EVERYBODY WHO WANTS DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE, AND LIBERTY." WORDS OF SUBCOMANDANTE INSURGENTE MARCOS

REVOLUTIONARY ART

Dissimulated Knowledge

Reality is created through communication...

(history is created by he who gets to the typewriter first)

Radical groups have long since attacked conformity with creativity, the language of the soul is particularly good for breaking down barriers and communicating new ways.

The "Minister Of Culture" for the Black Panther Party, Emory Douglass was well versed in the concept of revolutionary art.

Briefly, the Panthers started when corrupt cops were shaking down and beating local citizens. Seizing on their first amendment right to bear arms as long as they were on display, the Panthers followed around the cop cars, and when an incident began, they would get out and look intimidating.

Emory Douglass developed into an extreme artist for extreme times. He perceived a key relationship between liberation and education / preparation. His revolutionary art (and writing) concentrated on "new images of victory" to get the defeatist attitude out of peoples minds. Taking their cue from the notion that

'the oppressed must destroy their oppressors'

revolutionary artists aimed to convince the community of black people, through their observations of the work,

they feel they have the right to destroy the enemy.

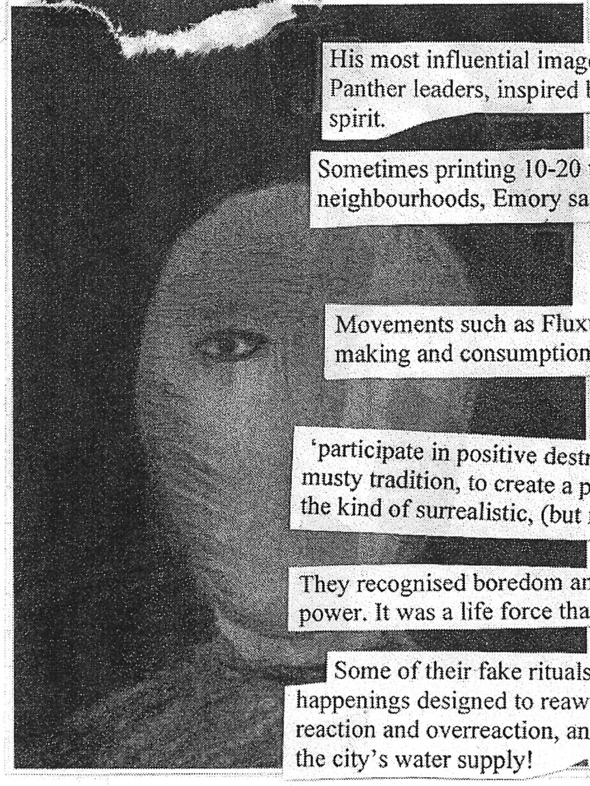
Douglass created pictures that clearly supported the Panthers militant thrust. Rather than showing images of a utopian future to be lived after the revolution, he encouraged illustrating the ongoing political struggle.

"When we say we want freedom we are to illustrate how were going to get it"

he matched his scenes with slogans and quotes

'All the weapons we use against each other we now use against the oppressor'

'AmeriKKKa'



His most influential images were of black men fighting police. He also made heroising posters of Panther leaders, inspired by 60s propaganda posters, and communist images expressing victorious spirit.

Sometimes printing 10-20 thousand copies of posters and circulating them throughout urban black neighbourhoods, Emory said

revolutionary art was for everybody, and the ghetto was the gallery.

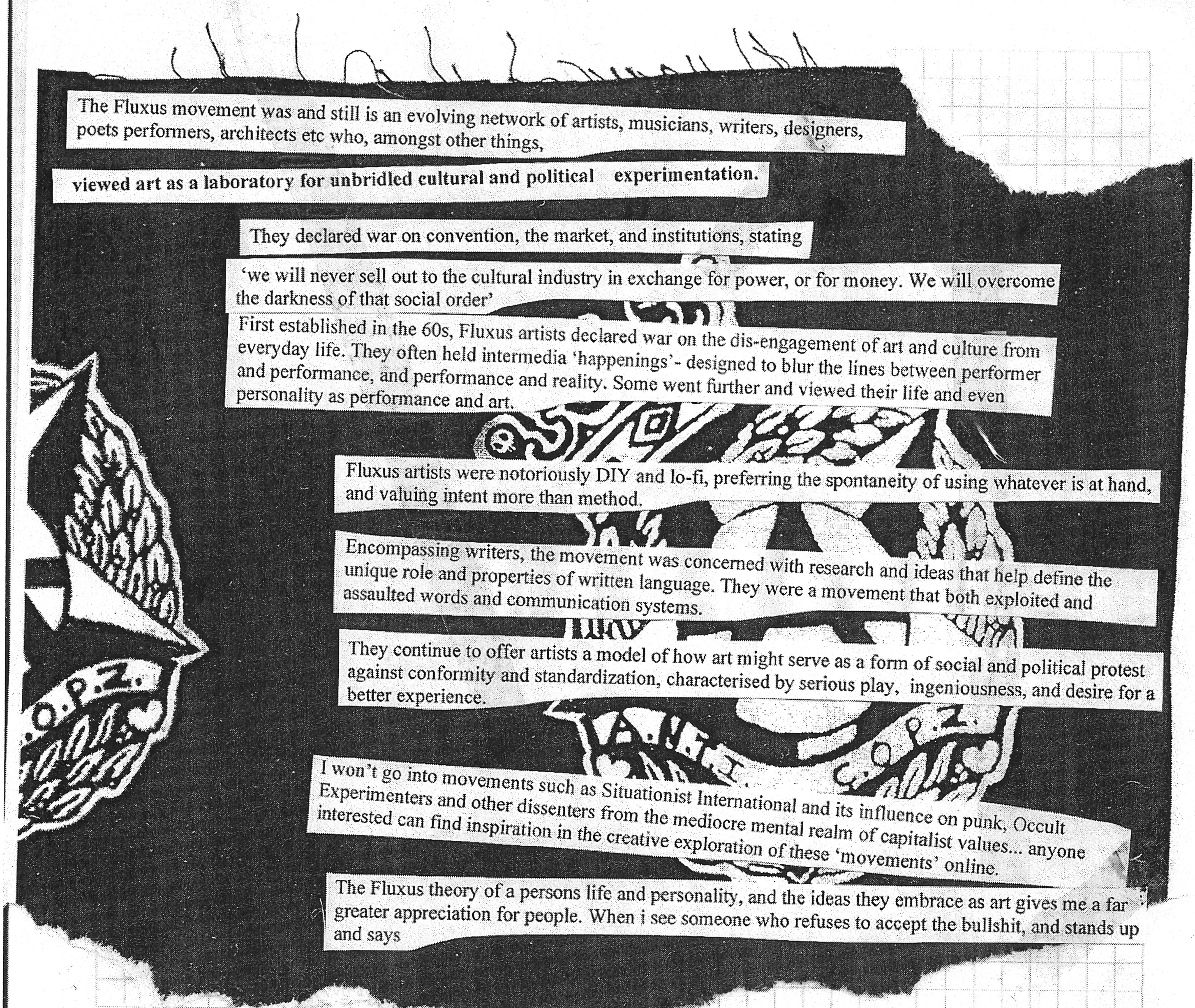
Movements such as Fluxus, Provo, Situationism, along with Emory Douglass, believed that image making and consumption were in themselves acts of resistance.

Provo took its name from provocateur, and they invited participants to

'participate in positive destructive purposes and to go with a dagger of hoaxes deep into the heart of musty tradition, to create a provocative atmosphere to reignite the flame within to burst out into action, the kind of surrealistic, (but real) agitation of changing society and transforming man'

They recognised boredom and alienation were powerful energies that had symbolic, poetic and artistic power. It was a life force that could be harnessed for social change.

Some of their fake rituals and actions provoked violent responses from authority, like their happenings designed to reawaken the addicts of consumer culture.. They provoked the police into reaction and overreaction, and in their heyday wild rumours circulated, such as they were going to drug the city's water supply!



The Fluxus movement was and still is an evolving network of artists, musicians, writers, designers, poets performers, architects etc who, amongst other things,

viewed art as a laboratory for unbridled cultural and political experimentation.

They declared war on convention, the market, and institutions, stating

'we will never sell out to the cultural industry in exchange for power, or for money. We will overcome the darkness of that social order'

First established in the 60s, Fluxus artists declared war on the dis-engagement of art and culture from everyday life. They often held intermedia 'happenings'- designed to blur the lines between performer and performance, and performance and reality. Some went further and viewed their life and even personality as performance and art.

Fluxus artists were notoriously DIY and lo-fi, preferring the spontaneity of using whatever is at hand, and valuing intent more than method.

Encompassing writers, the movement was concerned with research and ideas that help define the unique role and properties of written language. They were a movement that both exploited and assaulted words and communication systems.

They continue to offer artists a model of how art might serve as a form of social and political protest against conformity and standardization, characterised by serious play, ingeniousness, and desire for a better experience.

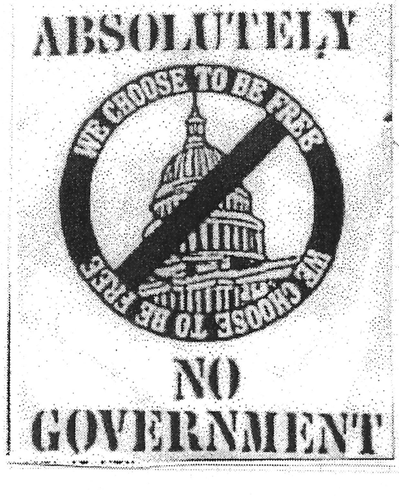
I won't go into movements such as Situationist International and its influence on punk, Occult Experimenters and other dissenters from the mediocre mental realm of capitalist values... anyone interested can find inspiration in the creative exploration of these 'movements' online.

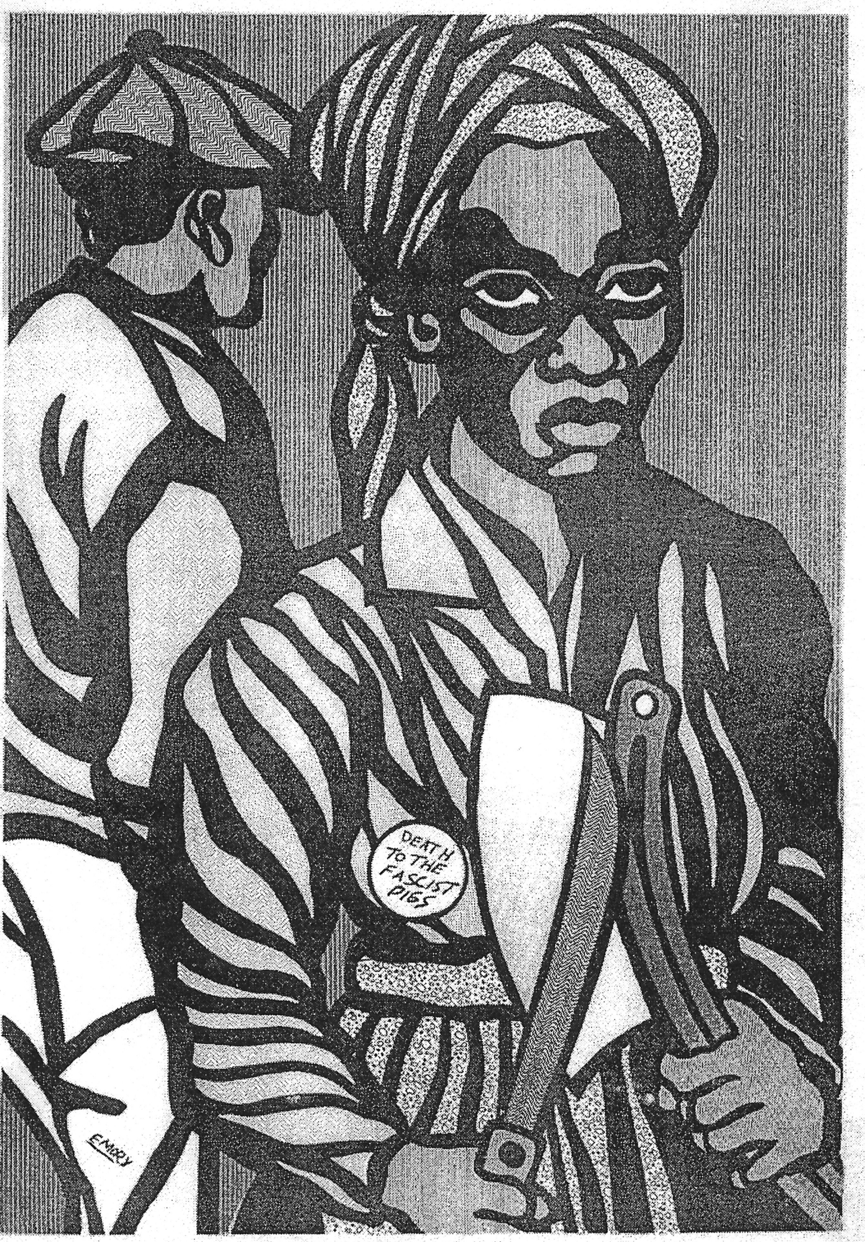
The Fluxus theory of a persons life and personality, and the ideas they embrace as art gives me a far greater appreciation for people. When i see someone who refuses to accept the bullshit, and stands up and says

"Im gonna try, im gonna work something out, to find a way of beating this stupid social order"

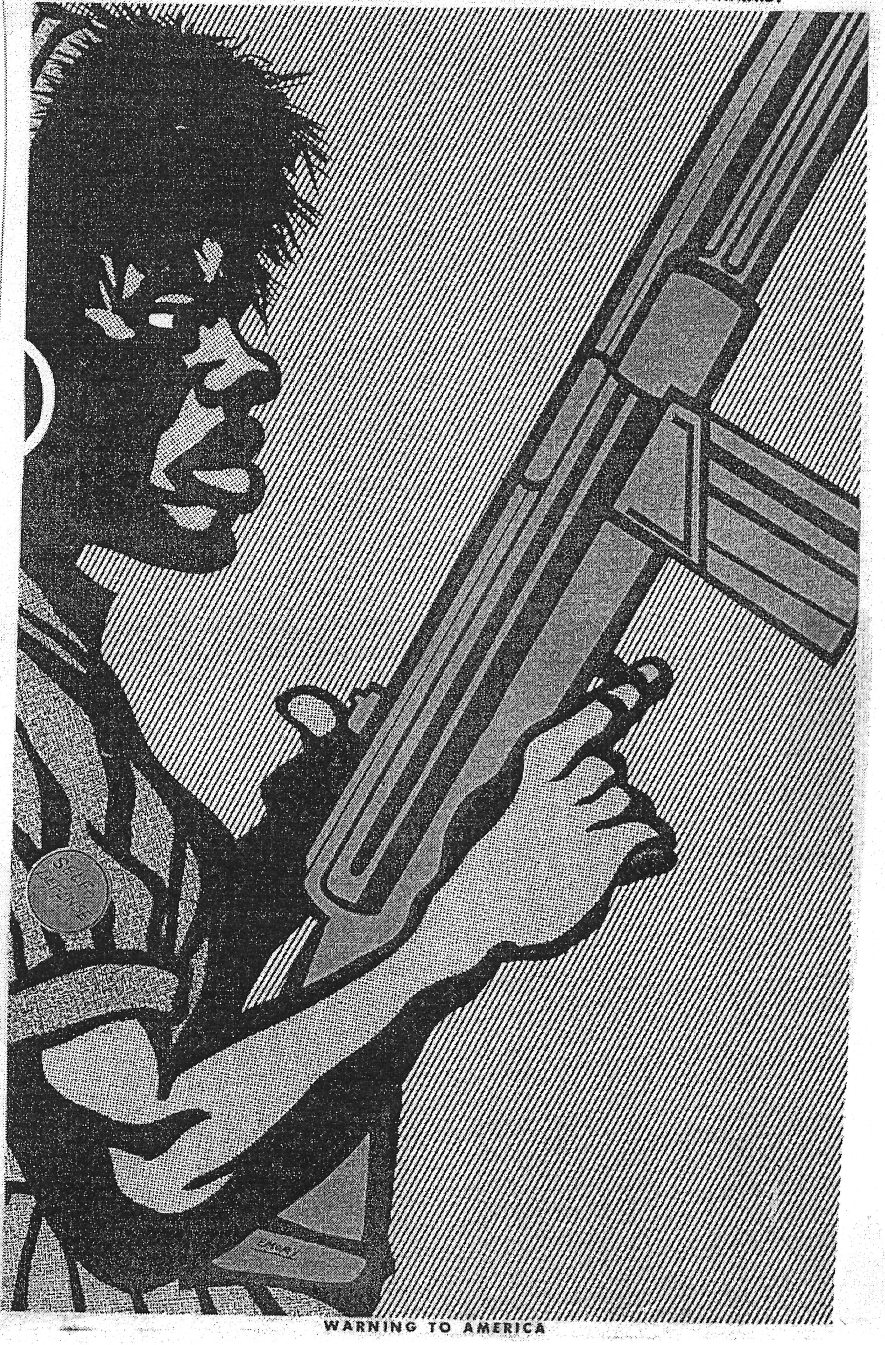
its like their existence is a beautiful work in progress, and I am enriched, and enfused with their soul, and inspired in my own warrior spirit.

So, yeah, THANKYOU!!

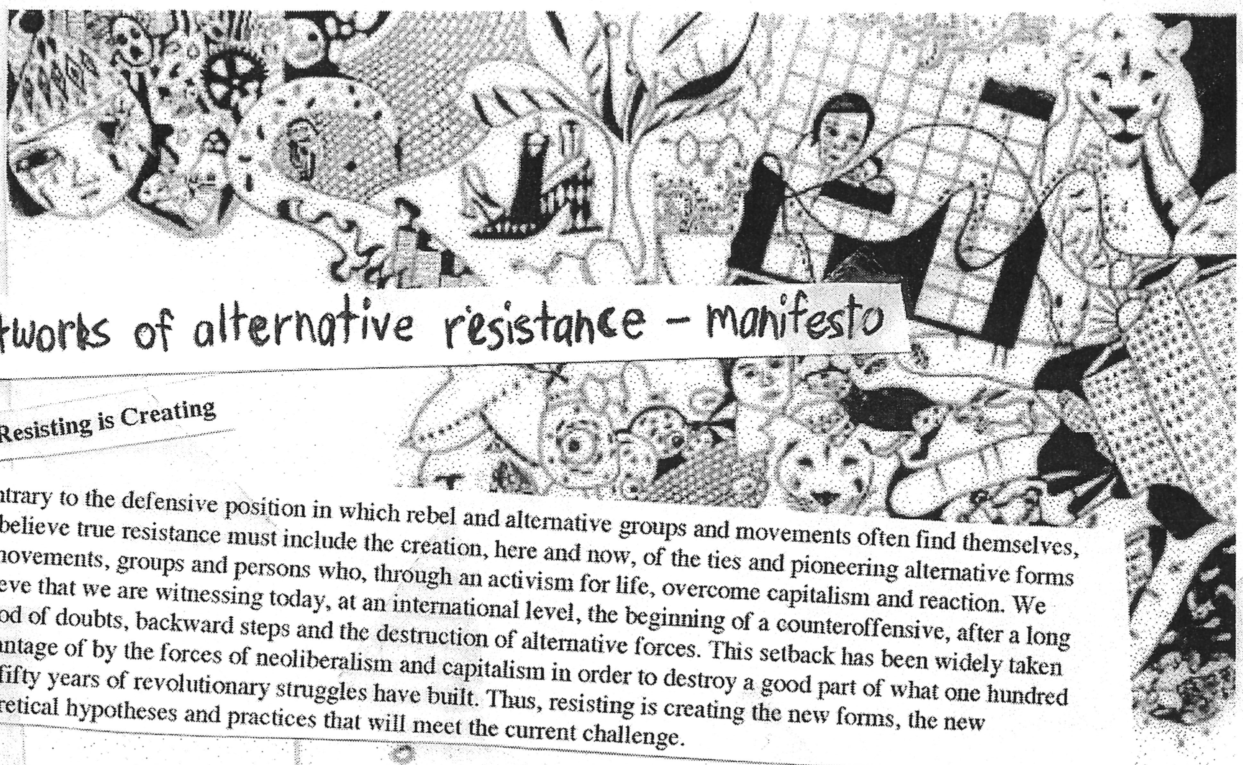

ABSOLUTELY
WE CHOOSE TO BE FREE
WE CHOOSE TO BE FREE
NO
GOVERNMENT


ALL THE WEAPONS WE USED TO USE AGAINST
EACH OTHER WE NOW USE AGAINST THE OPPRESSOR
DEATH TO THE FASCIST PIGS
EMORY

BY ALL MEANS AVAILABLE


"WE ARE FROM 25 TO 30 MILLION STRONG, AND WE ARE ARMED. AND WE ARE CONSCIOUS
OF OUR SITUATION. AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO CHANGE IT. AND WE ARE UNAFRAID."

WARNING TO AMERICA



networks of alternative resistance - manifesto

1. Resisting is Creating

Contrary to the defensive position in which rebel and alternative groups and movements often find themselves, we believe true resistance must include the creation, here and now, of the ties and pioneering alternative forms of movements, groups and persons who, through an activism for life, overcome capitalism and reaction. We believe that we are witnessing today, at an international level, the beginning of a counteroffensive, after a long period of doubts, backward steps and the destruction of alternative forces. This setback has been widely taken advantage of by the forces of neoliberalism and capitalism in order to destroy a good part of what one hundred and fifty years of revolutionary struggles have built. Thus, resisting is creating the new forms, the new theoretical hypotheses and practices that will meet the current challenge.

2. Resisting Sadness

We are living through a period that is profoundly marked by sadness. Not just the sadness of tears, but also, and above all, the sadness of impotence. The men and women of our time are living in the certainty that life's complexity is such that the only thing we can do, at the risk of making it worse, is to submit to the discipline of economics, self-interest and egoism. The social and individual sadness wears us down and convinces us that we no longer have the means of living a true life, and so we submit to the order and discipline of survival. The tyrant needs the sadness, because in that way each one of us is isolated in his own small, virtual and disturbing world. But, at the same time, men need the tyrant, in order to justify their sadness. We believe that the first step to be taken against sadness (the manner in which capitalism is present in our lives) is the creation of concrete ties of solidarity. Breaking the isolation, creating solidarity, is the beginning of a commitment, of an activism that no longer operates "against," but rather "for" life, happiness, through the liberation of potency.

3. Resistance is Multiplicity

The struggle against capitalism, which cannot be reduced to the struggle against neoliberalism, implies practices of multiplicity. Capitalism has invented a single, one dimensional world, but that world does not, "in itself," exist. It requires our submission and our agreement in order to exist. That unified world - which is a world become merchandise - is opposed to the multiplicity of life. It is opposed to the infinite dimensions of desire, of imagination and of creation. It is opposed, fundamentally, to justice. That is why we believe that every struggle against capitalism that is trying to be global or all-encompassing remains trapped in the structure of capitalism itself, that is, globalism. Resistance should start from and develop multiplicities, through the creation of ties of solidarity and help. In no case, however, should it be a management or structure that globalizes, that centralizes, those struggles.

4. Resisting is a Dispersed Center

A resistance network that respects multiplicity is a circle that contains, poetically and paradoxically, its center in all parts.

5. Resisting is Not Desiring Power

One hundred and fifty years of revolutions have taught us that, contrary to the classic vision, the place of power, the centers of power, are, at the same time, centers of minimal power, or impotence. Power deals with management, so to speak. It is not, in itself, able to change the social structure from above, if the potency of the real ties in the base do not allow them to do so. Potency is, then, by its nature, separate from established power. That is why we think that what happens "above" is in the order of management, and politics, in the noble sense, is what happens "below," in the arena of constituted power. That is why alternative resistance will be powerful as it abandons the trap of hope, that is, the classic political mechanism of deferring the moment of liberation invariably to a "mañana," to a later. The "liberating masters" are asking us for obedience today, in the name of a liberation we will see tomorrow, but mañana is always mañana. This is why we are proposing to the liberating masters (political commissars, bureaucratized leaders and other sad activists) liberation here and now, and obedience mañana.

6. Resisting the Serial

Power maintains and develops sadness, aided by the ideology of insecurity. Capitalism could not exist without serializing, without dividing, without separating. And separation triumphs when, little by little, people, towns, nations exist obsessed with insecurity. Nothing is easier to discipline than a town of sheep convinced that they are, each and every one of them, a wolf for the other. Insecurity and violence are real, but only insofar as we accept them. That is, that we accept this ideological illusion that makes us believe that we, each one of us, are individuals isolated from the rest. The sad man lives as if he had been flung onto a set: the others are extras. Nature, the world and animals are "useful," and each one of us is the central and sole protagonist of our lives. Then the individual is no longer a person, the individual is a fiction, a label. The person, on the other hand, is each one of us, but on the condition that we open our eyes to the reality of our belonging to this substantive everything that is the world. It is about rejecting the labels of profession, nationality, civil status, unemployed, employees, handicapped, etcetera. It is behind these labels that the power is trying to unify and standardize the multiplicity that each one of us is. But we are multiplicities, mixed with multiplicities. That is why the social tie is not something that has to be constructed, but rather assumed. Individuals, labels, live and reinforce the virtual world. They receive news of their own lives through the television screen. Alternative resistance involves giving a place to the reality of men, women, nature. Individuals find themselves like sad sedentary beings, trapped in their labels and roles. That is why the alternative involves assuming a libertarian nomadism.

7. Resisting Without Masters

The creation of a different life must involve, fundamentally, the creation of alternatives, of ways of life, of ways of desiring. If we desire what the master has, if we desire in the same way the master does, we will be condemned to repeat the famous revolutions, but, this time, in the physical meaning of the word "revolution," that is, a full circle to a same point. It is then about inventing and creating new practices and images of happiness, in the concrete. If we think that one can only be happy in the individualist way of the master, and we ask for a revolution that satisfies us, we will be eternally condemned to changing masters. A communism must be created, not out of necessity, but out of the pleasure brought by solidarity. It should not be shared in the sad way, that is, because we are obligated. The pleasure of a fuller, more free life must be discovered. In the society of separation, of atomization, that is, in capitalist society, men and women do not find what they desire: they must be content with desiring what they find. Separation is separation, of one from the other, as well as of each of us from the world, of the worker from his product, but, at the same time, each one of us from us, separated, exiled from our very selves. It is the structure of sadness.

8. A Politics of Liberty

Politics, in effect, in its deepest meaning, is connected with emancipating practices, with the ideas and images of happiness that are derived from them. The political is fidelity to an active search for liberty. In contrast to that idea of the political, politics arises as the management of the situation as it appears to be given.

Management is a moment, it is a task, it is one aspect. But this one element tries to be everything. It claims the all of politics. It demands all the attention, and it hierarchizes priorities, limiting, halting and institutionalizing the vital energies that transcend it. Management is representation, and representation, as such, is only part of the real movement. This real movement does not require representation in order to exist, and the former representation on the other hand, tends to confine the potency of representation.

In this sense, revolutionary politics is not the opposite of management. In any event, what the politics are opposed to is separation and the deification of management. The latter, as part of everything, is part of politics. Management, when it tries to be the everything of politics is, on the other hand, the precise mechanism of the virtualization that is plunging us into impotence.

Revolutionary politics is that which pursues liberty at all times, but not associated so much with men or institutions, but rather as a constant evolution that does not allow itself to be tied down, to lose, to be embodied or institutionalized. The search for liberty is tied to the creating of the real movement, of the practical critique, of constant questioning and of the unlimited development of life.

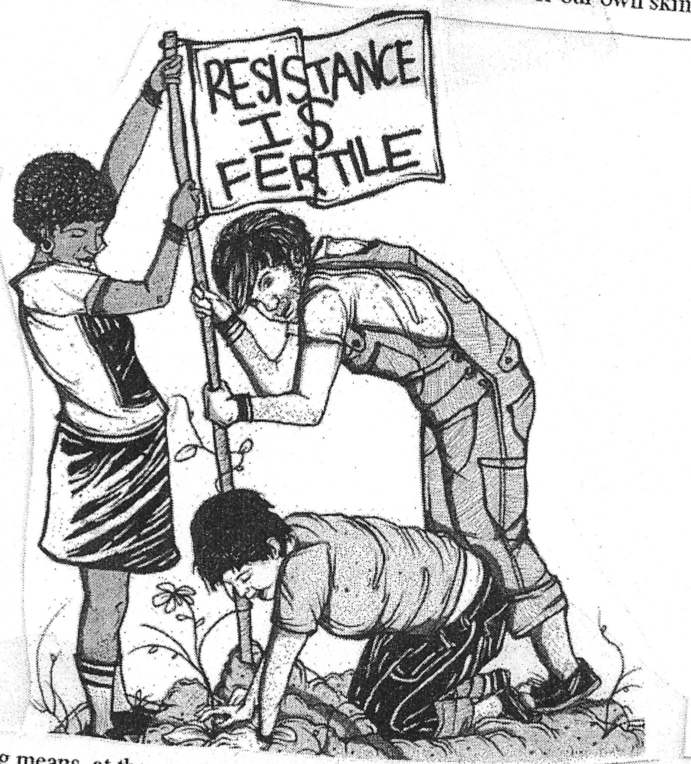
Politics as such is nothing other than the harmony of the multiplicity of life in permanent conflict with its own limits. Liberty is the deployment of its abilities and strengths; management is just a limited and circumscribed moment in which this deployment is represented.

9. Resistance and Counterculture

To resist is to create and to develop counterpower and counterculture. Artistic creation is not a luxury of man, it is a vital necessity, of which the great majority find themselves deprived. In the society of sadness, art was separated from life, what's more, art is increasingly more separated from art itself, because it is possessed, made rotten, by mercantile values. That is why artists understand perhaps better than many that resisting is creating. We are also directing ourselves to them, so that creation might overcome sadness, that is, separation, so that creation might free itself from the trap of money and recover its place in the heart of life.

10. Resisting Separation

Resisting is, at the same time, overcoming the capitalist separation between theory and practice, between the engineer and the worker, between the head and the body. A theory that is separated from practice is transformed into a sterile idea. That is why there are a myriad sterile ideas in our universities. At the same time, practices that are separated from theory are condemned to disappear, exhausted, fated to self-reabsorption. Resisting, then, is creating ties between theoretical hypotheses and practical hypotheses. Everything that knows something must also know how to transmit itself to those who wish to free themselves. In this way we create relationships, the ties that empower theories and practices of emancipation, turning our backs to the siren songs that propose that we "concern ourselves with our own lives." In that way, we respond that our lives because they are no longer just about survival extend beyond the limits of our own skin.



11. Resisting Normalization

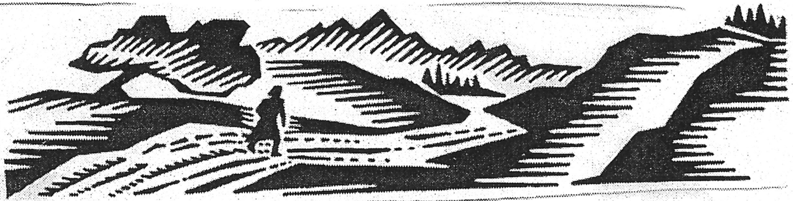
Resisting means, at the same time, deconstructing the falsely democratic talk that attempts to deal with the excluded sectors and people. The "excluded" do not exist in our societies. In our societies, we are all included in different ways, in ways which are more or less degrading and terrible, but included. Exclusion is not an accident, it is not an excess. What they call exclusion and insecurity is what we should see as the very essence of this society which loves death. This is why fighting against labels implies our desire to make contact with the struggles of the so-called "abnormals" or handicapped. Different persons and ways of being exist. Labels act as mini-concentration camps, where each one of us is defined by a given level of impotence. What interests us is potency, liberty. A handicapped person exists only in a society which accepts the difference between the strong and the weak. If we reject this, which is barbarism, we will not be able to retain the classification, the selection, of capitalism. That is why the alternative implies a world where each one of us assumes his or her fragility, and where each one of us develops what s/he can, with others and for life. We know, for example, the incredible richness of the deaf culture, created once men and women of courage learned how to break out of the prison of medical taxonomy. Similarly, the struggle against the psychiatrization of society, and so many other struggles which, far from being small struggles for a bit more space, are real creations which enrich life. For that, we are also inviting groups in struggle against the medical-social normalization discipline to resist with us.

There are similar occurrences with the forms of the subjects themselves in the educational systems. Normalization operates here as a constant threat of failure or unemployment. On the contrary, there exist parallel, alternative and diverse experiences regarding schooling, in which problems tied to education are deployed in a different logic.

The handicapped, unemployed, pensioners, marginalized cultures, homosexuals: these are all forms of sociological classification that operate to separate and isolate, based on impotence, on what they cannot do, rendering unilateral and poor what is multiple, rich, what can be viewed as full of potency.

12. Resisting Retreat

Resisting is also rejecting the temptation of a retreat to identity, which separates nationals from foreigners. Immigration, the migratory flows, are not a problem. They have been a profound reality of humanity forever, and will be so forever. It is not about being philanthropically good to foreigners. It is about desiring the richness that mestizaje produces. Resisting is creating ties among those "without" without homes, without work, without papers, those without dignity, those without land, all those without who do not have the "right skin color," the right sexual practices, etcetera. A union of those without, a fraternity of those without, not in order to be "with," but in order to build societies where those without and those with no longer exist.



13. Resisting Ignorance

Our societies, which purport to being scientific cultures are, in reality from an historical and anthropological perspective the societies which have produced the highest level of ignorance that the human odyssey has known. If all societies have technicians, our society is the first to be actually possessed by technology. Ninety percent of our contemporaries are incapable of knowing what happens between the moment they push the buttons and the moment in which the desired effect is produced. Ninety percent of our contemporaries know nothing about almost all the means and mechanics of the world in which they live. Thus our culture produces ignorant men and women, who, feeling exiled from their environment, are able to simply destroy it. The violence of this exile is such that humanity, for the first time, finds itself facing the real and concrete perhaps inevitable possibility of its destruction. They tell us that, given the complexity of technology, men should accept it without understanding it. The ecological disaster, however, demonstrates that those who believe they understand technology are far from managing it. It is urgent that collectives, groups, socialization forums of knowledge, be created, so that men can once more have their feet in the real world. Nowadays, genetic technology is putting us on the edge of a selection among human beings according to criteria of productivity and profit. Eugenics, in the name of the good, dehumanizes humanity. They tell us, from the screens that order our lives, that we can already proceed to cloning a human being, and our sad, disoriented humanity does not know what a human being is. These are deeply political questions which should not be left in the hands of technicians. The public man should not turn into the technical man.

14. Resistance is Constant

Resisting is affirming that, contrary to what we might believe, liberty will never be a point of arrival. Hope, paradoxically, plunges us in sadness. Liberty and justice exist only in the here and now, in and through the paths which build them. There is no good master or utopia fulfilled. Utopia is the political name of the very essence of life, that is, constant evolution. This is why the objective of resistance will never be power. Power and the powerful are themselves condemned to not being able to distance themselves too far from what a people desire. That is why it is always a slave mentality to believe that the power decides what is real in our lives. That is why the sad man we would say needs the tyrant. It is not enough to ask those men who hold power to dictate such and such a law, separate from the practices of the social base. We cannot, for example, ask a government to dictate laws of solidarity with foreigners if we do not built this solidarity in the social base. Law and the power, if they are democratic, should reflect the state of the real life of society. That is why our problem is not whether the power is corrupt and arbitrary. Our problem and our challenge is the society that this power reflects. Our task, as free men and women, is to see that ties of solidarity exist, of liberty and friendship, which truly prevent the power from being reactionary. There is no liberty other than the practice of liberation.

15. The Alternative is Struggle

One cannot truly be anti-capitalist and accept, at the same time, the images of happiness and fulfillment which the system itself generates. If one desires to be like the master, to have what the master has, one is in the position of being a slave. The path of liberty is incompatible with the master,s desire. It is exactly from the resistance that other images of happiness and liberty arise, alternative images, tied to creation and communism.

Desiring the master's power is the opposite of desiring liberty. And liberty is to become free, it is struggle. The building of ties increases potency. Capitalist separation diminishes it. The struggle for liberty is now communist struggle to recover and increase potency. Capitalism, on the contrary, operates by abstraction, by serializing and reification, breaking down ties and plunging them into impotence. That is why the struggle for liberty and democracy is a constant becoming, never finding a definitive incarnation. That is why the struggle is always finding potency, building ties, nurturing the desire for liberty in each specific situation.

16. Worker Resistance

Resistance and the creation of new societies demands that we look at the same time at the question of the so-called revolutionary subject, that is, the working class, messianic character within modern historicism. Contrary to what postmodern sociologists say about complexity, the working class is not disappearing. The workers, function has simply been displaced and arranged geographically. Thus, if there are numerically fewer workers in the central countries, production has been displaced to the so-called peripheral countries, where the brutal exploitation of men, women and children guarantees enormous profits to capitalist companies. And so, in the central countries, through evoking insecurity and fear, they propose national alliances to the popular classes, in order to better exploit the third world. We are saying that capitalist production is a dispersed, unequal and combined production. That is why the struggle, the resistance, must be multiple, but, at the same time, one of solidarity. Individual or group liberation does not exist. Liberty is conjured only in universal terms, or, said in another way, my liberty does not end where another,s begins. My liberty, rather, does not exist without the other,s. We think that, if a revolutionary subject does not exist, multiple revolutionary subjects, of all sorts, do exist. These days we are seeing the flourishing of coordinadoras, collectives and workers groups, inundating group struggles with their demands. These struggles must, in each singularity and in each specific situation, transcend the master,s labels, that is, they must reject the separation between the employed and unemployed, between nationals and foreigners. Not because the employed person, the national, the man, the white, is being charitable with the unemployed, the foreigner, the woman, the handicapped, the minor, but because every struggle which accepts and reproduces these differences it must be said clearly and once and for all is a struggle, however violent it might be, that respects and reinforces capitalism.

But the workers, function is displaced in another sense. From the classic factory as a privileged physical space constituting value, to the social fabric, in which capital assumes the task of coordinating and subsuming each and every one of the social activities. Value is dispersed throughout all of society. It circulates through all the multiple forms of work. Capitalist accumulation is expanded to the entire society, and, therefore, it can be sabotaged at any point in the circuit, through acts of rebellion. Work adds value to the world in multiple ways, through the combination of a complex of purely technical, professional, administrative and creative tasks, whether manual or intellectual. In the base of the entire process is the strength of cooperation as the productive force of value.

17. Work and Not Working

Part of the building of the hierarchies and classifications that they impose on us stem from the confusion of the technical division of work and the social division of work. We understand two different things under the notion of work. On the one hand, a constituent activity, anthropological or ontological, of man, the totality of social relationships that make us up, the materialistic perspective of society and history. But, on the other hand, work is that duty, alienating, that modern slavery under which capital separates us into classes. It is that which makes us suffer when we have and when we have not. Abolishing work in this latter sense is to realize the possibilities of the communist idea of work, in the former sense.

The hierarchies that are founded in the one dimensionality of life regarding alienated work, in employment, are those which should be broken up, opening up the multiplicity of the knowledge and practices of life.

Work, from the ontological perspective, the totality of activities that effectively give value to the world (technical, scientific, artistic, political) are, at the same time, a source of radical democratization and a definitive and total questioning of capitalism.

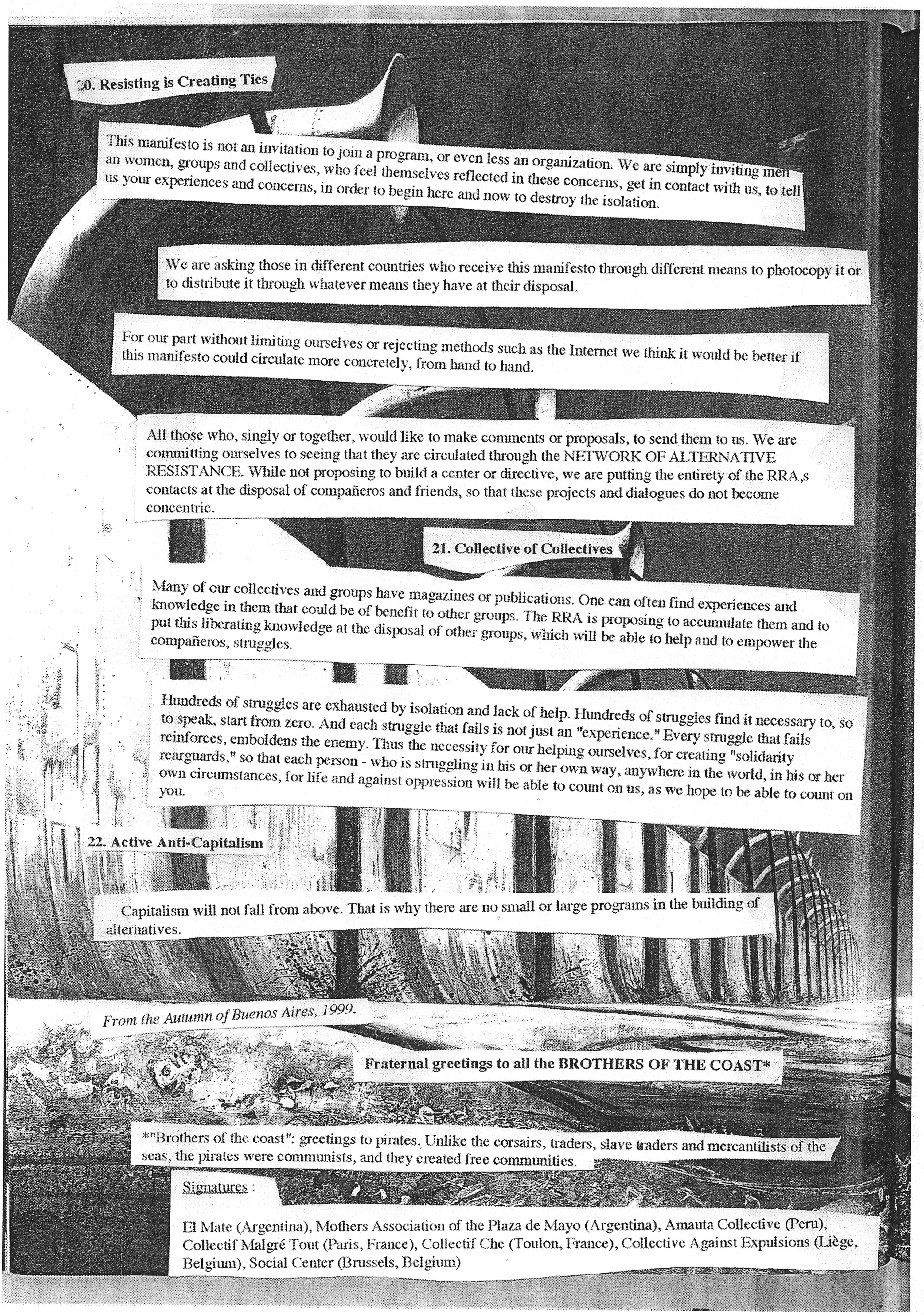
18. Resisting is Constructing Practices

Resisting is not, then, having opinions. In our world, contrary to what is believed, there is not a "single way of thinking." There are innumerable different ideas. What happens is that different opinions do not imply really alternative practices. Those opinions, therefore, are only opinions ruled by the single way of thinking, or by the single practice. This mechanism of sadness, which makes us have different opinions and single practices, must be stopped. Breaking with the world of the spectacle means no longer being spectators of our own lives, spectators of the world. Attacking the virtual world this world that needs to discipline us, to serialize us, that needs each and every one of us to be in front of the television at the same hour in order to inform us is not, then, saying how the world, the economy, education, should be, in an abstract way. Resisting is building millions of practices, of resistance groups that will not allow themselves to be trapped by what the virtual world calls "seriousness." To be truly serious is not to think globally and confirm our impotence. To be serious involves building, here and now, the networks and ties of resistance that will free life from this world of death. Sadness is profoundly reactionary. It is understandable, but it is still reactionary. Sadness makes us impotent. Liberation is, ultimately, also liberation from the political commissars, in short, from all these bitter and sad liberating masters. That is why resisting is also this invitation to create networks that will take us out of isolation. The power wants us isolated and sad. We know how to be happy and in solidarity. It is in this sense that we do not recognize activism as an individual choice. We all have a particular level of commitment. Activists and independents do not exist. We are all tied together. The question is in knowing, on the one hand, what degree of commitment one has, and, on the other, what side of the struggle one is committed to.

BEET THE SYSTEM

19. Connecting is Empowering

It is absolutely essential to reflect on our practices. To think about them, to make them visible, intelligible, comprehensible. To be able to conceptualize what we are doing is part of the legitimacy of our constructs, and, in addition, of the socialization of knowledge between those who think doing, and those who do thinking. To ourselves be readers, thinkers and theoreticians of our practices, in order to avoid our becoming impoverished with normalizing readings. To be capable of valuing our work.



20. Resisting is Creating Ties

This manifesto is not an invitation to join a program, or even less an organization. We are simply inviting men an women, groups and collectives, who feel themselves reflected in these concerns, get in contact with us, to tell us your experiences and concerns, in order to begin here and now to destroy the isolation.

We are asking those in different countries who receive this manifesto through different means to photocopy it or to distribute it through whatever means they have at their disposal.

For our part without limiting ourselves or rejecting methods such as the Internet we think it would be better if this manifesto could circulate more concretely, from hand to hand.

All those who, singly or together, would like to make comments or proposals, to send them to us. We are committing ourselves to seeing that they are circulated through the NETWORK OF ALTERNATIVE RESISTANCE. While not proposing to build a center or directive, we are putting the entirety of the RRA,s contacts at the disposal of compañeros and friends, so that these projects and dialogues do not become concentric.

21. Collective of Collectives

Many of our collectives and groups have magazines or publications. One can often find experiences and knowledge in them that could be of benefit to other groups. The RRA is proposing to accumulate them and to put this liberating knowledge at the disposal of other groups, which will be able to help and to empower the compañeros, struggles.

Hundreds of struggles are exhausted by isolation and lack of help. Hundreds of struggles find it necessary to, so to speak, start from zero. And each struggle that fails is not just an "experience." Every struggle that fails reinforces, emboldens the enemy. Thus the necessity for our helping ourselves, for creating "solidarity rearguards," so that each person - who is struggling in his or her own way, anywhere in the world, in his or her own circumstances, for life and against oppression will be able to count on us, as we hope to be able to count on you.

22. Active Anti-Capitalism

Capitalism will not fall from above. That is why there are no small or large programs in the building of alternatives.

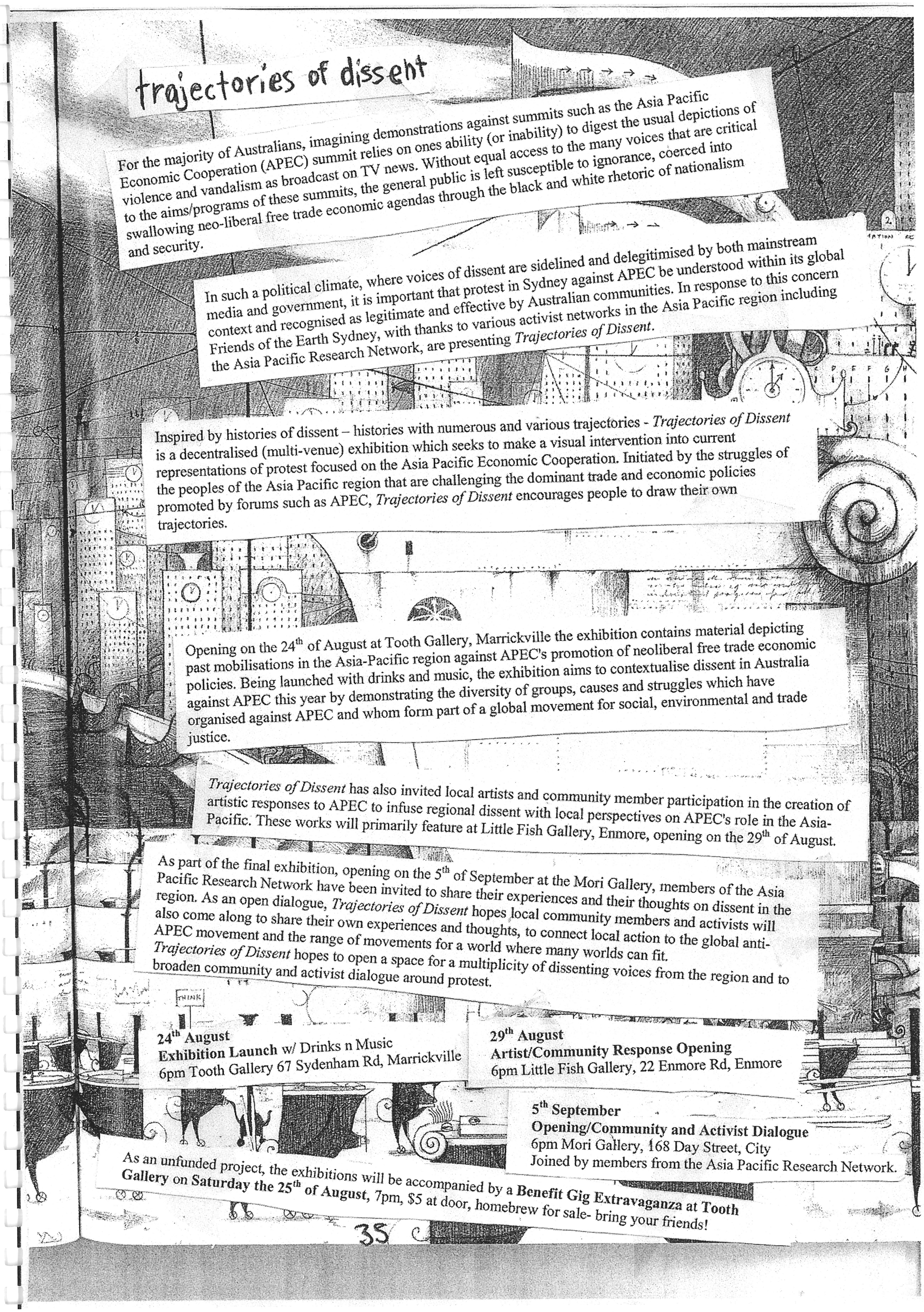
From the Autumn of Buenos Aires, 1999.

Fraternal greetings to all the BROTHERS OF THE COAST*

*"Brothers of the coast": greetings to pirates. Unlike the corsairs, traders, slave traders and mercantilists of the seas, the pirates were communists, and they created free communities.

Signatures :

El Mate (Argentina), Mothers Association of the Plaza de Mayo (Argentina), Amauta Collective (Peru), Collectif Malgré Tout (Paris, France), Collectif Che (Toulon, France), Collective Against Expulsions (Liège, Belgium), Social Center (Brussels, Belgium)



trajectories of dissent

For the majority of Australians, imagining demonstrations against summits such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit relies on ones ability (or inability) to digest the usual depictions of violence and vandalism as broadcast on TV news. Without equal access to the many voices that are critical to the aims/programs of these summits, the general public is left susceptible to ignorance, coerced into swallowing neo-liberal free trade economic agendas through the black and white rhetoric of nationalism and security.

In such a political climate, where voices of dissent are sidelined and delegitimised by both mainstream media and government, it is important that protest in Sydney against APEC be understood within its global context and recognised as legitimate and effective by Australian communities. In response to this concern Friends of the Earth Sydney, with thanks to various activist networks in the Asia Pacific region including the Asia Pacific Research Network, are presenting *Trajectories of Dissent*.

Inspired by histories of dissent – histories with numerous and various trajectories - *Trajectories of Dissent* is a decentralised (multi-venue) exhibition which seeks to make a visual intervention into current representations of protest focused on the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. Initiated by the struggles of the peoples of the Asia Pacific region that are challenging the dominant trade and economic policies promoted by forums such as APEC, *Trajectories of Dissent* encourages people to draw their own trajectories.

Opening on the 24th of August at Tooth Gallery, Marrickville the exhibition contains material depicting past mobilisations in the Asia-Pacific region against APEC's promotion of neoliberal free trade economic policies. Being launched with drinks and music, the exhibition aims to contextualise dissent in Australia against APEC this year by demonstrating the diversity of groups, causes and struggles which have organised against APEC and whom form part of a global movement for social, environmental and trade justice.

Trajectories of Dissent has also invited local artists and community member participation in the creation of artistic responses to APEC to infuse regional dissent with local perspectives on APEC's role in the Asia-Pacific. These works will primarily feature at Little Fish Gallery, Enmore, opening on the 29th of August.

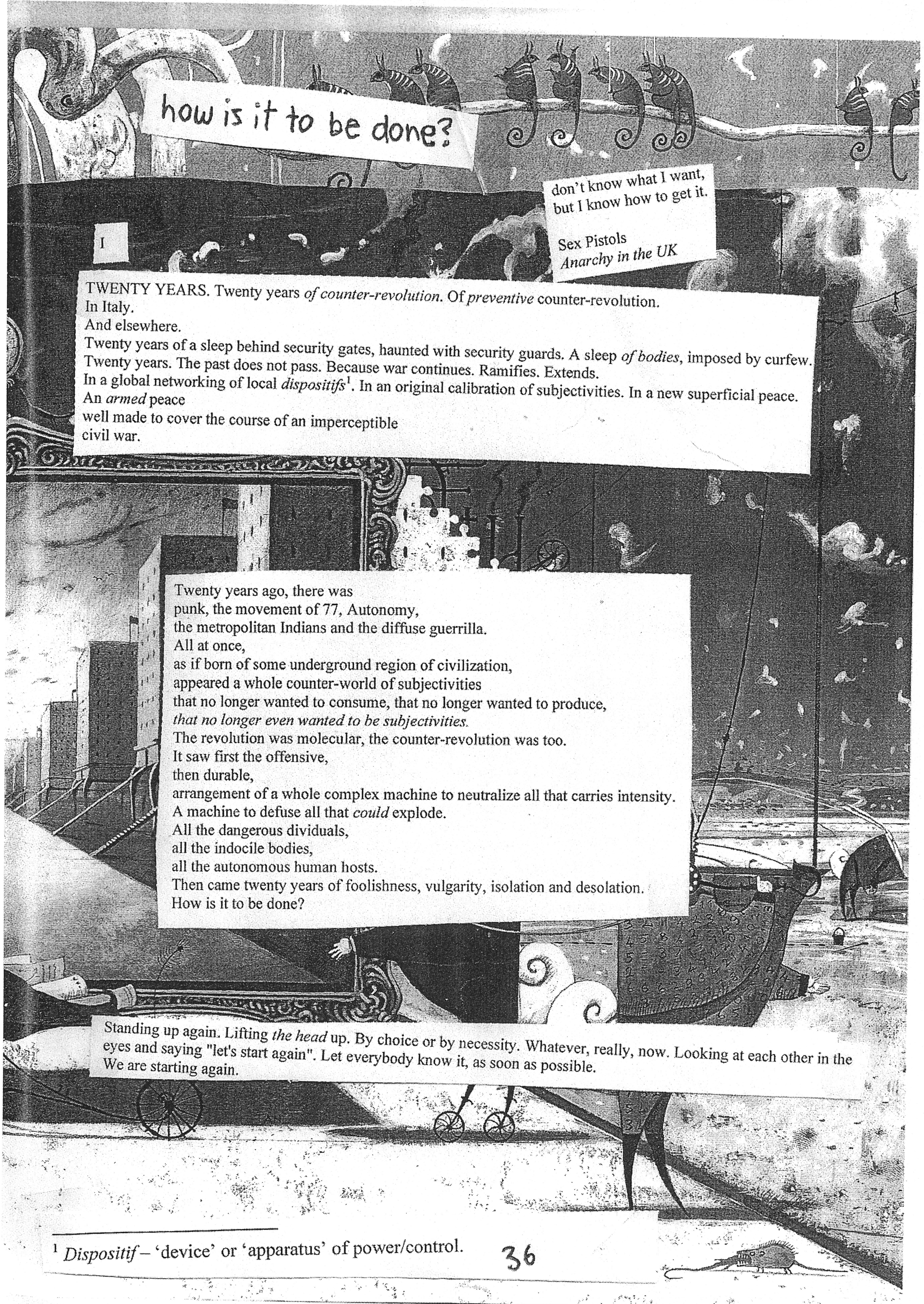
As part of the final exhibition, opening on the 5th of September at the Mori Gallery, members of the Asia Pacific Research Network have been invited to share their experiences and their thoughts on dissent in the region. As an open dialogue, *Trajectories of Dissent* hopes local community members and activists will also come along to share their own experiences and thoughts, to connect local action to the global anti-APEC movement and the range of movements for a world where many worlds can fit. *Trajectories of Dissent* hopes to open a space for a multiplicity of dissenting voices from the region and to broaden community and activist dialogue around protest.

24th August
Exhibition Launch w/ Drinks n Music
6pm Tooth Gallery 67 Sydenham Rd, Marrickville

29th August
Artist/Community Response Opening
6pm Little Fish Gallery, 22 Enmore Rd, Enmore

5th September
Opening/Community and Activist Dialogue
6pm Mori Gallery, 168 Day Street, City
Joined by members from the Asia Pacific Research Network.

As an unfunded project, the exhibitions will be accompanied by a **Benefit Gig Extravaganza at Tooth Gallery on Saturday the 25th of August**, 7pm, $5 at door, homebrew for sale- bring your friends!



how is it to be done?

> don't know what I want,
> but I know how to get it.
>
> Sex Pistols
> *Anarchy in the UK*

I

TWENTY YEARS. Twenty years *of counter-revolution*. Of *preventive* counter-revolution.
In Italy.
And elsewhere.
Twenty years of a sleep behind security gates, haunted with security guards. A sleep *of bodies*, imposed by curfew.
Twenty years. The past does not pass. Because war continues. Ramifies. Extends.
In a global networking of local *dispositifs*[1]. In an original calibration of subjectivities. In a new superficial peace.
An *armed* peace
well made to cover the course of an imperceptible
civil war.

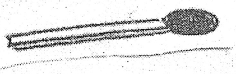
Twenty years ago, there was
punk, the movement of 77, Autonomy,
the metropolitan Indians and the diffuse guerrilla.
All at once,
as if born of some underground region of civilization,
appeared a whole counter-world of subjectivities
that no longer wanted to consume, that no longer wanted to produce,
that no longer even wanted to be subjectivities.
The revolution was molecular, the counter-revolution was too.
It saw first the offensive,
then durable,
arrangement of a whole complex machine to neutralize all that carries intensity.
A machine to defuse all that *could* explode.
All the dangerous dividuals,
all the indocile bodies,
all the autonomous human hosts.
Then came twenty years of foolishness, vulgarity, isolation and desolation.
How is it to be done?

Standing up again. Lifting *the head* up. By choice or by necessity. Whatever, really, now. Looking at each other in the eyes and saying "let's start again". Let everybody know it, as soon as possible. We are starting again.

---

[1] *Dispositif* – 'device' or 'apparatus' of power/control.

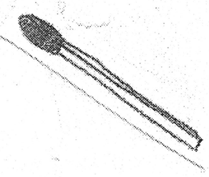
Done with passive resistance, inner exile, conflict by subtraction, survival. We are starting again. In twenty years, we have had enough time to see. We have understood. Demokracy for all, "anti-terrorist" struggle, state massacres, capitalist restructuring and the Great Work of the social purge,
by selection,
by casualisation,
by normalisation,
by "modernisation".
We have seen, we have understood. The means and the ends. The future that is reserved for us. The one we are denied. The state of exception. The laws that put the police, the administration, the judicial authorities above the laws. The judiciarisation, the psychiatrisation, the medicalisation of everything that escapes the frame. Of everything that *flees*.
We have seen, we have understood. The means and the ends.



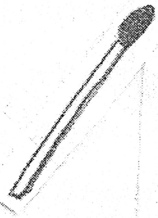
When power establishes in real time its own legitimacy,
when its violence becomes preventive
and its right is a "right to interfere",
then it is useless to be right. To be right *against it*.
One has to be stronger, or slier. That is also why
we are starting again.

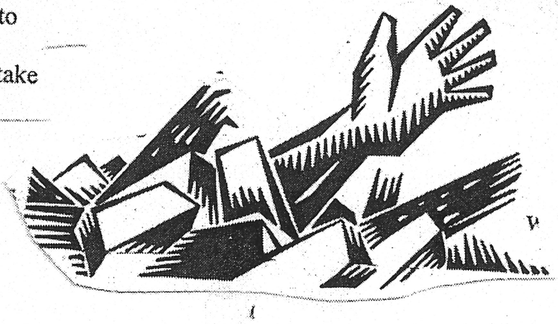
For instance there are tricks
we will no longer fall for.
The trick of "society". To be transformed. To be destroyed. To be bettered.
The trick of the social bond. That some would break while others can pretend to "restore" it.
We will no longer fall for these tricks.
One must be a militant element of the planetary-petty-bourgeoisie,
a *citizen* really,
not to see that society no longer exists.
That it has imploded. That it is only an argument for the terror of those who claim to re/present it.
That which has absented.

To start again is never to start *something* again. Nor to pick up things where they had been left off. What you start again is always *something else*. Is always unheard of. Because it is not the past that drives us to it, but precisely what in it
has not
happened.
And because it is also *ourselves*, then, who are starting again.
To start again means: to get out of suspension. To restore the contact between our becomings.
Moving,
again,
from where we are,
now.

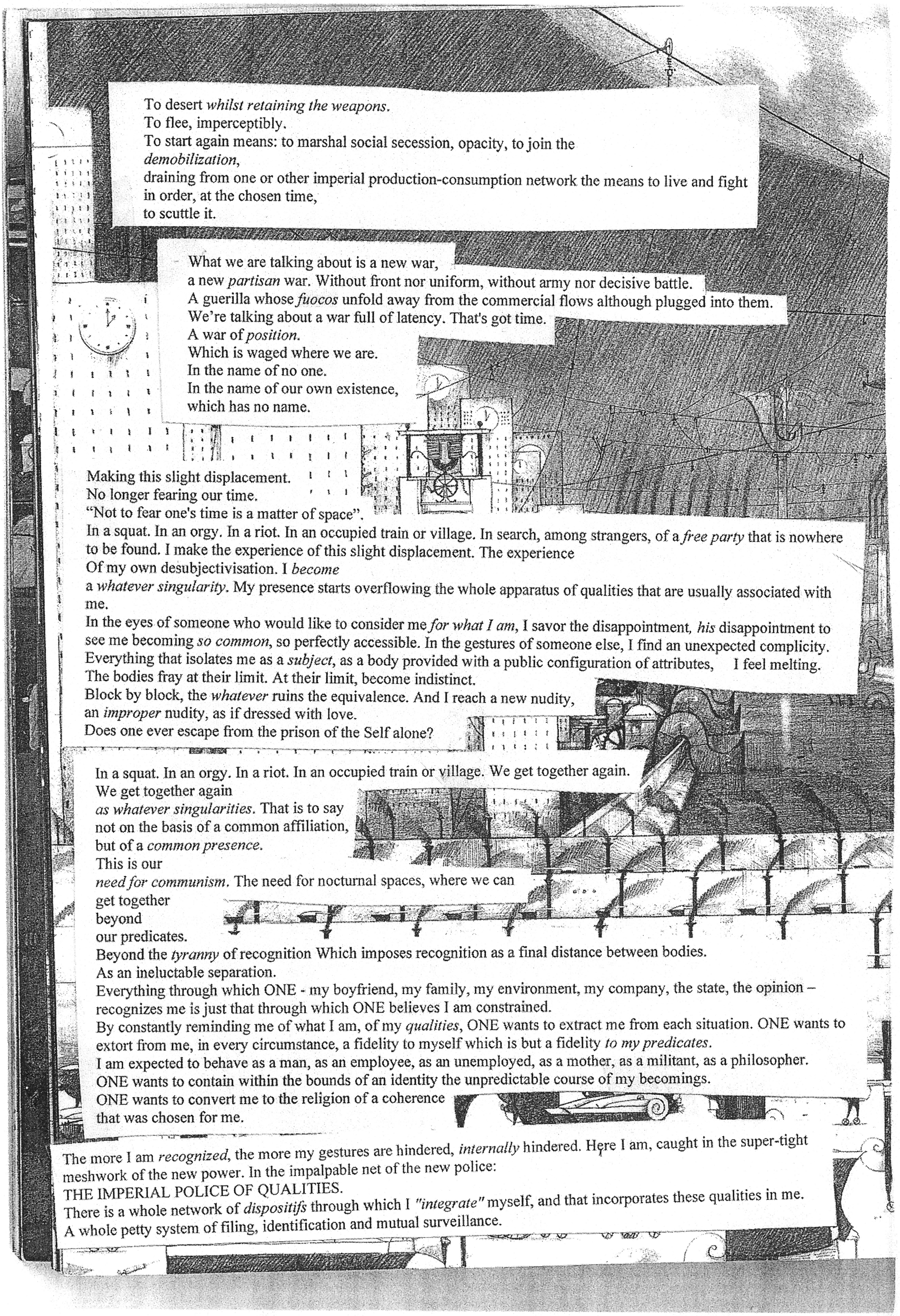


All that is social has become alien to us.
We consider ourselves as absolutely free of any obligation, of any prerogative, of any affiliation that is *social*.
"Society"
is the name that the Irreparable has often received
among those who also wanted to turn it into
the Unassumable.
He who refuses this delusion will have to take
a step to the side
to make
a slight displacement
from the common logic
of Empire and its protest,
the logic of *mobilization*,
from their common temporality,
that of *emergency*.





To start again means: to inhabit this displacement. To face capitalist schizophrenia in the sense of a growing capacity of *desubjectivisation*.



To desert *whilst retaining the weapons.*
To flee, imperceptibly.
To start again means: to marshal social secession, opacity, to join the *demobilization*,
draining from one or other imperial production-consumption network the means to live and fight in order, at the chosen time,
to scuttle it.

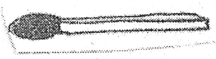
What we are talking about is a new war,
a new *partisan* war. Without front nor uniform, without army nor decisive battle.
A guerilla whose *fuocos* unfold away from the commercial flows although plugged into them.
We're talking about a war full of latency. That's got time.
A war of *position.*
Which is waged where we are.
In the name of no one.
In the name of our own existence,
which has no name.

Making this slight displacement.
No longer fearing our time.
"Not to fear one's time is a matter of space".
In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In an occupied train or village. In search, among strangers, of a *free party* that is nowhere to be found. I make the experience of this slight displacement. The experience
Of my own desubjectivisation. I *become*
a *whatever singularity*. My presence starts overflowing the whole apparatus of qualities that are usually associated with me.
In the eyes of someone who would like to consider me *for what I am*, I savor the disappointment, *his* disappointment to see me becoming *so common*, so perfectly accessible. In the gestures of someone else, I find an unexpected complicity.
Everything that isolates me as a *subject*, as a body provided with a public configuration of attributes, I feel melting.
The bodies fray at their limit. At their limit, become indistinct.
Block by block, the *whatever* ruins the equivalence. And I reach a new nudity,
an *improper* nudity, as if dressed with love.
Does one ever escape from the prison of the Self alone?

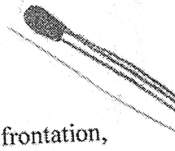
In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In an occupied train or village. We get together again.
We get together again
as whatever singularities. That is to say
not on the basis of a common affiliation,
but of a *common presence.*
This is our
need for communism. The need for nocturnal spaces, where we can
get together
beyond
our predicates.
Beyond the *tyranny* of recognition Which imposes recognition as a final distance between bodies.
As an ineluctable separation.
Everything through which ONE - my boyfriend, my family, my environment, my company, the state, the opinion – recognizes me is just that through which ONE believes I am constrained.
By constantly reminding me of what I am, of my *qualities*, ONE wants to extract me from each situation. ONE wants to extort from me, in every circumstance, a fidelity to myself which is but a fidelity *to my predicates.*
I am expected to behave as a man, as an employee, as an unemployed, as a mother, as a militant, as a philosopher.
ONE wants to contain within the bounds of an identity the unpredictable course of my becomings.
ONE wants to convert me to the religion of a coherence
that was chosen for me.

The more I am *recognized*, the more my gestures are hindered, *internally* hindered. Here I am, caught in the super-tight meshwork of the new power. In the impalpable net of the new police:
THE IMPERIAL POLICE OF QUALITIES.
There is a whole network of *dispositifs* through which I *"integrate"* myself, and that incorporates these qualities in me.
A whole petty system of filing, identification and mutual surveillance.

A whole diffuse prescription of absence.
A whole machinery of comporte/mental control, which aims at panopticism, at privatized transparency, at atomization.
And in which I struggle.

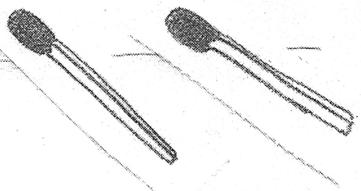


I need to become anonymous. In order to be present.
The more anonymous I am, the more present I am.
I need zones of indistinction
to reach the Common.
To no longer *recognize* myself in my name. To no longer hear in my name anything but the voice that calls it.
To give substance to the *how* of beings, not *what* they are but *how* they are what they are. Their life-form.
I need zones of opacity where the attributes,
even criminal, even brilliant,
no longer separate bodies.



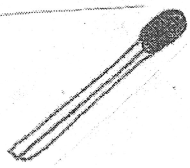
Becoming whatever. Becoming a whatever *singularity*, is not given.
Always possible, but never given.
There is a *politics* of the *whatever singularity*.
Which consists in snatching from Empire
the often interstitial conditions and means
to experience yourself as such.
This is political, because it implies a capacity of confrontation,
and it corresponds to a new human aggregation.
The politics of the *whatever singularity*: opening those spaces where no act is assignable to any given body.
Where the bodies recover their ability of *gesture* which the so clever distribution of metropolitan devices – computers, cars, schools, cameras, cell-phones, gyms, hospitals, televisions, cinemas, etc. – had stolen from them.
By recognising them.
By immobilising them.
By making them spin uselessly.
By making the head exist separately from the body.

The politics of the *whatever singularity*.
Becoming *whatever* is more revolutionary than any *whatever-being*..
Liberating spaces sets us free a hundred times more than any "liberated space".
More than putting any power into action, I enjoy the circulation of my potentialities. The politics of the *whatever singularity* lies in the offensive. In the circumstances, the moments and the places where we seize the circumstances,
the moments and the places
of such an anonymity,
of a momentary halt in a state of simplicity,
the opportunity to extract from all our forms *the pure adequation to the presence*,
the opportunity, at last, to be
here.

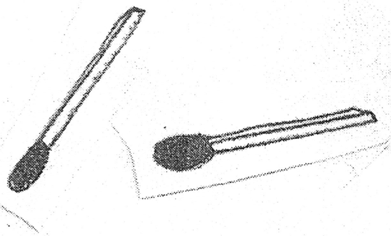


II

How is it to be done? Not *what is to be done? How to do*? The question of the means.
Not of the goals, the *objectives,*
of what *there is* to be done, strategically, in the absolute.
The question of what we *can* do, tactically, *from* the situation,
and of the *acquisition* of this ability.
How to? How to desert? How does it work? How to make a fit between my wounds and communism? How to stay at war without losing tenderness?
The question is technical. Not a problem. Problems are profitable.
They feed experts.
A question.
A question of techniques. Which reduplicates itself in the question of the techniques of *transmission* of those techniques.
How to do? The result always contradicts the goal. Because setting an end is still a means.
another means.

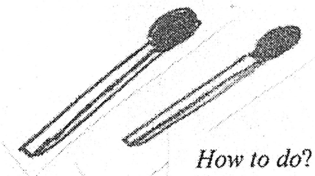


What is to be done? Babeuf, Chernychevsky, Lenin. Classical virility needs an analgesic,



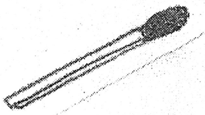
a mirage, something. A *means* to ignore yourself a bit more. As a presence.
As a life-form. As a *situated* being, endowed with inclinations.
Determined inclinations.
What is to be done? Voluntarism as the ultimate nihilism. As the nihilism peculiar *to classical virility.*

What to do? The answer is simple: submit once again to the logic of mobilization, to the temporality of emergency. On the pretext of rebellion. Set down ends, *words*. Tend towards their accomplishment. Towards the accomplishment *of words*. In the meantime, postpone existence. Put yourself into brackets. Live in the exception of yourself. Well away from time. That passes. That does not pass. That stops.
Until… Until the next end.



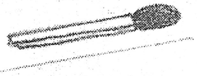
What to do? In other words: life is futile. All that you have not lived, History will return to you.
What to do? It is the ignorance of oneself cast onto the world.
As ignorance of the world.

How to do? The question of *how*. Not of *what* a being, a gesture, a thing *is* but of *how* it is what it is. The question of how its predicates relate to it.
And it to them.
Let be. Let be the gap between the subject and its predicates. The *abyss* of the presence.
A man is not "a man". A "white horse" is not a "horse".
The question of *how*. The *attention* to the *how*. The attention to the way "a woman" is, and is not a woman – it takes many *dispositifs* to turn a female being into "a woman",
or a black-skinned man into "a Black".
The attention to the *ethical difference*. To the ethical *element*. To the irreducibilities that run through it.
What goes on between bodies in an occupation is more interesting than the occupation itself.
How to do? means that the military confrontation with Empire has to be subordinated to the intensification of the relationships inside our Party. It means the political is just a certain degree of intensity *within* the ethical element. That revolutionary war must not be confused with its representation: the raw fact of the struggle.

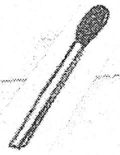


The question of *how*? To pay attention to the happening of things, of beings. To their event. To the tenacious and silent saliency of their own temporality under the planetary crushing of all temporalities by the one of emergency.
The *What to do?* as the programmatic denial of this. As the inaugural formula of a busy lack of love.

The *What to do?* is coming back. It has been coming back for a few years. Since the mid-nineties more than since Seattle. A revival of the *critique* is pretending to challenge Empire.
With the slogans and tricks of the sixties. Except that this time it is faked.
Innocence, indignation, good intentions and the need for society are faked. The whole range of old social-democratic affects are put back into circulation. Of *Christian* affects.
And again, here come the demonstrations. The desire-killing demonstrations where nothing happens.
And which no longer demonstrate anything
but a collective absence.
Now and forever.



For those who feel nostalgic about Woodstock, pot, May 68 and militancy, there are the counter-summits. The setting has been set again, *minus the possible*.
Here is today's command of the *What to do?*: to travel to the other side of the world in order to contest the global commodity,
And then come back, after a big bath of unanimity and mediatised separation,
to submit yourself to the local commodity.
Back home, you've got your picture in the newspaper… All alone together!... Once upon a time… Good old youth!…
Too bad for the few living bodies lost there, looking in vain for some room for their desires.
They will return a bit more bored. A bit more tired. Weakened.
From counter-summit to counter-summit, they will eventually understand. Or not.

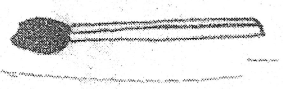


One doesn't contest Empire over its management. One doesn't *critique* Empire.
You *oppose* its forces.
From where you are.
To give your opinion about such or such alternative, to go where you are called, makes no sense. There is no global alternative project to the global project of Empire. Because there's no global project of Empire. There is an *imperial*

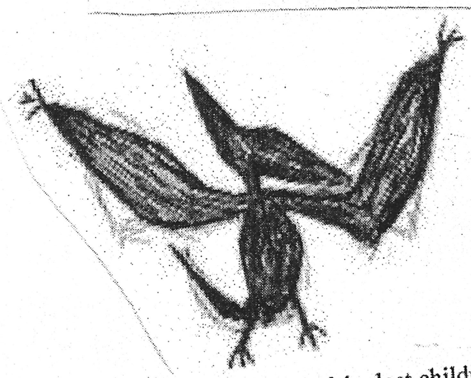
management. Any management is bad. Those who demand another society should better start to realize that there is none left. And maybe they would then stop being wannabe-managers. Citizens. *Indignant* citizens.

The global order cannot be taken as an enemy. Directly.
Because the global order does not *take place*. On the contrary. It is the order of the non-places.
Its perfection is not to be global, but to be *globally local*. The global order is the exclusion of any event because it is the utmost, authoritarian occupation of the local. The global order can only be opposed *locally*. Through the extension of opaque zones over Empire's maps. Through their growing contiguity.
Underground.

The coming politics. Politics of local insurrection against global management. Of presence won over the absence to oneself. Over the citizen, the imperial estrangement.
Won through theft, fraud, crime, friendship, enmity, conspiracy.
Through the elaboration of ways of living that are also
ways of fighting.
The politics of the event.

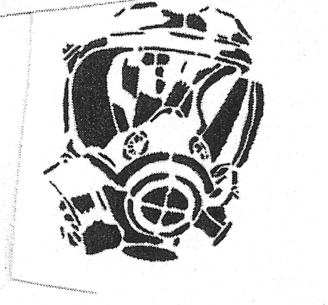


Empire is everywhere nothing is happening. It administrates absence by waving the palpable threat of police intervention in any place.
Whoever regards Empire as an opponent to confront will meet preventive annihilation.
From now on, to be perceived means to be defeated.

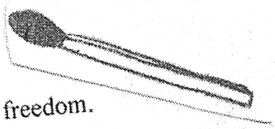


Learning how to become imperceptible. To merge. To regain the taste
for anonymity
for promiscuity.
To renounce distinction,
To elude the clampdown:
setting the most favourable conditions for confrontation.
Becoming sly. Becoming merciless. And for that purpose
becoming *whatever*.

How to do? is the question of the lost children. Those who were not told. Those with the clumsy gestures. To whom nothing was *given*. Whose creature-ality, whose wandering always betrays itself.
The coming revolt is the revolt of the lost children.
The thread of historical transmission has been broken. Even the revolutionary tradition leaves us as orphans. Especially the workers' movement. The workers' movement that's turned into a tool for higher integration to the Process. To the new, cybernetic Process of social valorisation.
In 1978, it was in the name of the workers' movement that the Italian Communist Party, the so-called "party with clean hands" launched its witch-hunt against Autonomy.
In the name of its classist conception of the proletariat, of its mystique of society, of respect for work, utility and decency.
In the name of "democracy" and legality.
The workers' movement which managed to survive through "*operaismo*".
The only existing critique of capitalism *from the point of view of Total Mobilization.*
A formidable and paradoxical doctrine,
that will have saved Marxist objectivism by only talking about subjectivity.
That will have brought the denial of the *how* to an unprecedented sophistication.
That achieved the ultimate reduction of the gesture to its result.
The wheals of the *future anterior.*
Of what each thing *will have been.*



Critique has become vain. Critique has become vain because it amounts to an absence. Everyone knows where the ruling order stands. We no longer need *critical* theory. We no longer need teachers. Henceforth, *critique* is allied to domination. *Even the critique of domination.*
It reproduces absence. It speaks to us from where we are not. It propels us elsewhere. It consumes us. It is craven. And stays cautiously sheltered
when it sends us to the slaughter.
Secretly in love with its object, it continually lies to us.
Hence the brief romances between proletarians and 'engaged' intellectuals.
Those rational marriages in which neither has the same idea of pleasure or of freedom.
Rather than new critiques, it is new cartographies

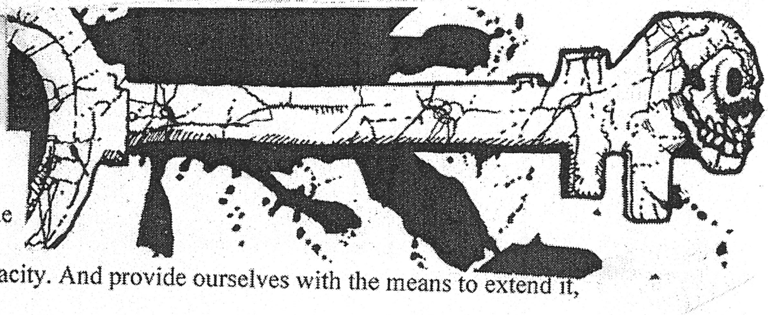


that we need.
Not cartographies of Empire, but of the lines that flee out of it.
How to do? We need maps. Not maps of what is off the map.
But navigating maps. *Maritime* maps. *Orientation* tools. That do not try to explain or represent what lies inside of the different archipelagos of desertion, but indicate how to join them.
Portulans.

III

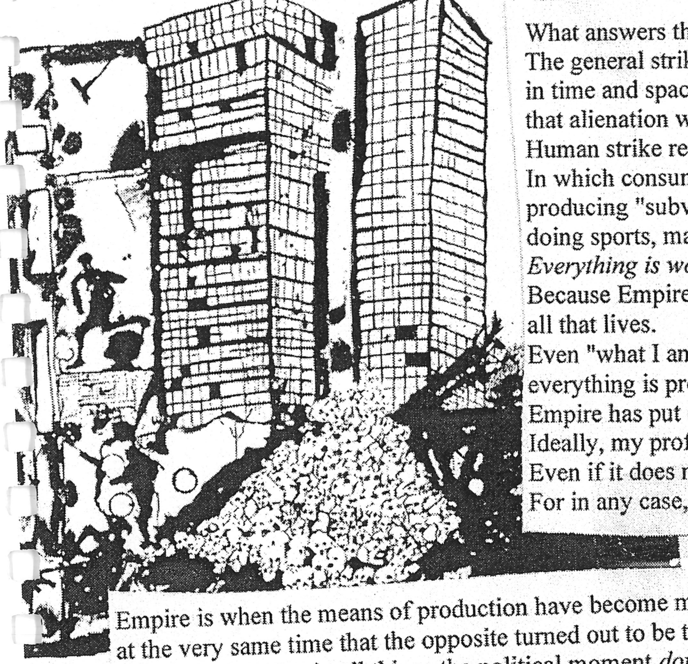
This is Tuesday, September the 17th 1996, just before dawn. The ROS (Special Operational Group) coordinates the arrest of some 70 Italian anarchists throughout the country.
The goal is to put an end to fifteen years of fruitless investigations of insurrectionalist anarchists.
The technique is well-known: fabricate a "turncoat", make him denounce the existence of a wide subversive hierarchical organization.
Then on the basis of this chimerical creation, accuse all those to be neutralized of being part of it.
Once again, "drain the sea to catch the fish".
Even though it is only a tiny pond.
And a few roaches.

An "informative service note" leaked out from the ROS on this case.
It explains its strategy.
Based on the principles of General Dalla Chiesa, the ROS is the classic example of imperial counter-insurrection service.
It works on the population.
Where an intensity has occurred, where something *happened*, it is the *French doctor* of the situation. The one that sets, under cover of prophylaxis,
the lines of quarantine aimed at isolating
the contagion.
What it fears is written in this document. What it fears is *"the swamp of political anonymity"*.
Empire is afraid.
Empire is afraid that we might become *whatever*.
A delimited circle, an armed organization. It does not scare them. But an expansionary constellation of squats, self-managed farms, collective homes, *fine a se stesso* meetings, radios, skills and ideas. The whole linked by an intense circulation of bodies, and of the affects between those bodies. That is quite another matter.



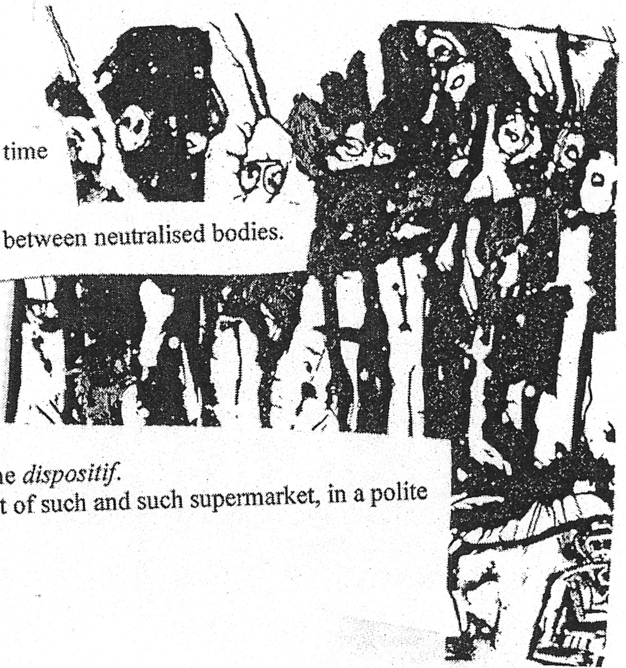
Offensive Opacity Zones are not
to be created.
They are already there, in all the relations in which a true
communication occurs between bodies.
All we have to do is to accept that we are part of this opacity. And provide ourselves with the means to extend it, to defend it.
Wherever we manage to thwart imperial *dispositifs*, to ruin all the perpetual work of Biopower and Spectacle, to extricate from the population a fraction of the *citizens*. To isolate new *untorelli*. In this recovered indistinction
an autonomous ethical fabric
will spontaneously form
a plan of secessionist consistency.
Bodies aggregate. Breathe again. Conspire.
That such zones be condemned to be suppressed militarily really does not matter. What matters, each time, is to preserve a sure escape route.
And then re-aggregate
Elsewhere.
Later.
Underlying the problem of *What is to be done?* was the *myth* of the general strike.

The *conspiracy of the bodies*. Not of the critical minds, but of the *critical corporeities.*
This is what Empire fears. This is what is slowly rising,
with the increase of the flows
of social defection.
There is an opacity inherent to the *contact* of bodies. Which is not compatible with the imperial reign of a light that shines on things
only to disintegrate them.

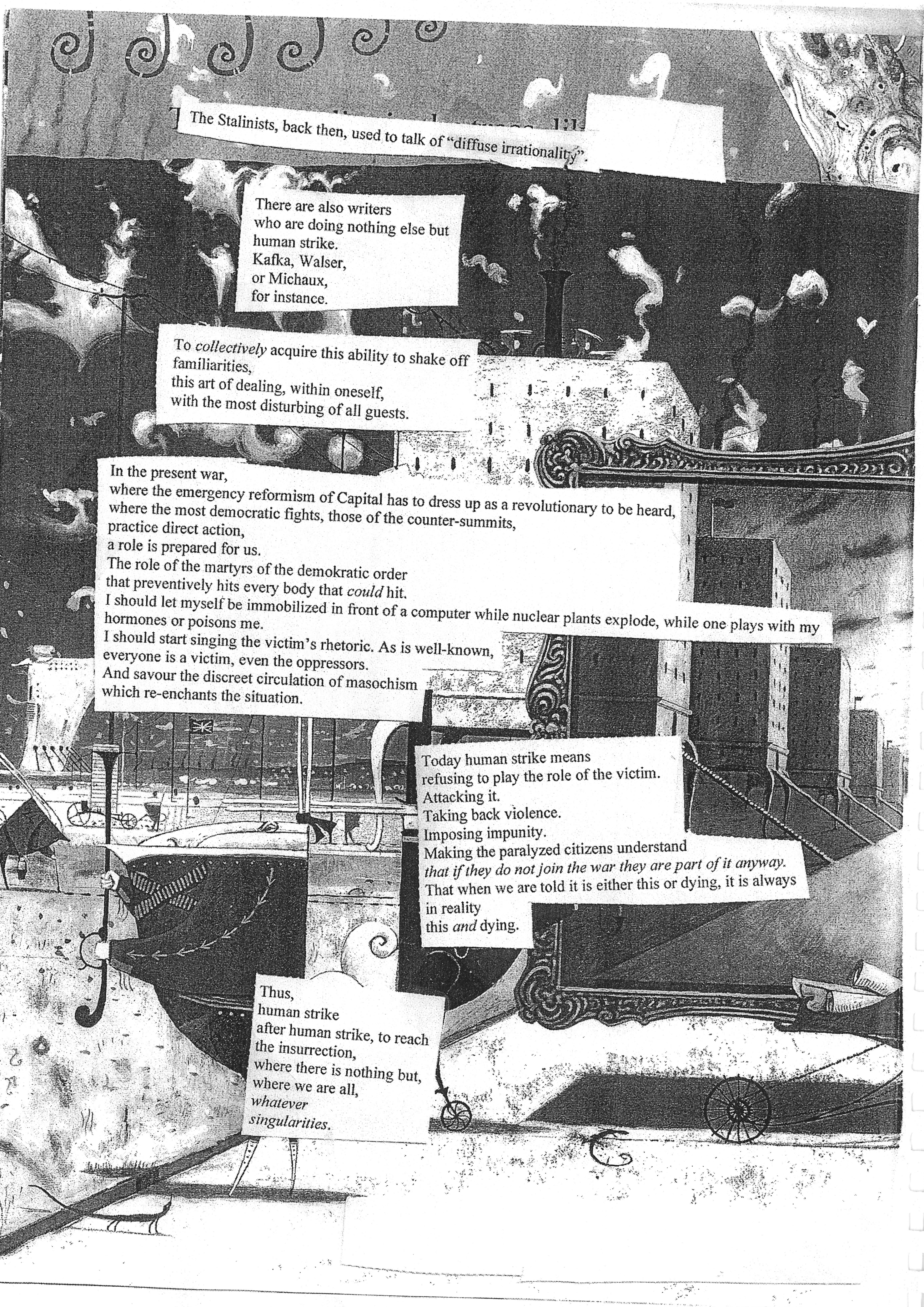


What answers the question *How to do?* is the *practice* of the HUMAN STRIKE.
The general strike meant that exploitation was limited
in time and space,
that alienation was partial, due to a recognizable enemy, and thus beatable.
Human strike replies to an age in which the limits between work and life are fading away.
In which consuming and surviving,
producing "subversive texts" and dealing with the most toxic effects of industrial civilization,
doing sports, making love, being a parent or under Prozac
Everything is work.
Because Empire manages and digests, absorbs and reintegrates
all that lives.
Even "what I am", the subjectivisation that I do not deny *hic et nunc*,
everything is productive.
Empire has put everything to work.
Ideally, my professional profile will coincide with my own face.
Even if it does not smile.
For in any case, the grimaces of the rebel sell nicely.

Empire is when the means of production have become means of control
at the very same time that the opposite turned out to be true.
Empire means that in all things the political moment *dominates*
the economic one.
A general strike is helpless against this.
What must be opposed to Empire is a human strike.
That never attacks relations of production without attacking at the same time
the affective knots which sustain them.
That undermines the shameful libidinal economy of Empire,
That restores the ethical element – the *how* – repressed in every contact between neutralised bodies.
Where one would expect such or such predictable reaction,
such or such contrite or indignant tone,
the human strike is that strike which
PREFERS NOT TO.
That slips away from the *dispositif*. That saturates it or explodes it.
Pulls itself together, preferring
something else.
Something else that does not belong to the authorized possibilities of the *dispositif.*
At the counter of such and such office of civil services, at the check out of such and such supermarket, in a polite conversation, during a police raid,
according to the balance of power,
human strike gives consistency to the spaces between bodies,
pulverizes the *double bind* in which they are caught,
force them into presence.
There is a whole new Luddism to be invented, a Luddism of the human machinery
that feeds Capital.



In Italy, radical feminism was an embryonic form of human strike.
"No more mothers, women and girls, let's destroy the families!" was an invitation to the gesture of breaking the expected chain of events,
to release the compacted potentialities.
It was a blow to fucked up love affairs, to ordinary prostitution.
It was a call to the overcoming of the couple as elementary unit in the management of alienation.
A call for complicity, then.
Such a practice required circulation, contagion.
The women's strike implicitly called for the strike of men and children, summoned them to run from factories, schools, offices and prisons,
to reinvent for each situation another way to be, another *how*.
Italy in the seventies was an enormous area of human strike.
"Self-reductions", hold-ups, squatted neighbourhoods, armed demonstrations, pirate radios, countless cases of "Stockholm syndrome", even the famous letters sent by Moro towards the end of his detention, were forms of human strike.



The Stalinists, back then, used to talk of "diffuse irrationality".

There are also writers
who are doing nothing else but
human strike.
Kafka, Walser,
or Michaux,
for instance.

To *collectively* acquire this ability to shake off familiarities,
this art of dealing, within oneself,
with the most disturbing of all guests.

In the present war,
where the emergency reformism of Capital has to dress up as a revolutionary to be heard,
where the most democratic fights, those of the counter-summits,
practice direct action,
a role is prepared for us.
The role of the martyrs of the demokratic order
that preventively hits every body that *could* hit.
I should let myself be immobilized in front of a computer while nuclear plants explode, while one plays with my hormones or poisons me.
I should start singing the victim's rhetoric. As is well-known,
everyone is a victim, even the oppressors.
And savour the discreet circulation of masochism
which re-enchants the situation.

Today human strike means
refusing to play the role of the victim.
Attacking it.
Taking back violence.
Imposing impunity.
Making the paralyzed citizens understand
that if they do not join the war they are part of it anyway.
That when we are told it is either this or dying, it is always
in reality
this *and* dying.

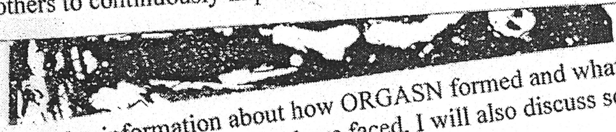
Thus,
human strike
after human strike, to reach
the insurrection,
where there is nothing but,
where we are all,
whatever
singularities.

arrestee solidarity reflections from G20: we don't have to re-invent the wheel

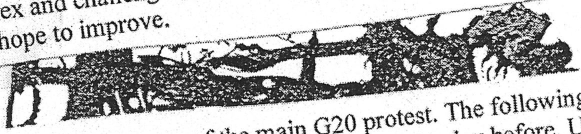
by turner

(These views do not represent the views of everyone in the ORGASN network)

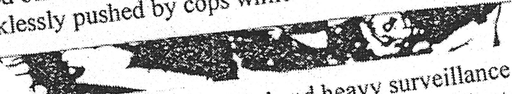
There is no doubting the fact that people were not prepared for the degree and style of police repression in the wake of the G20 protests. The people involved in the Ongoing G20 Arrestee Solidarity Network (ONGASN) have some useful experiences to contribute and we hope that we can work closely with Sydney crew and others to continuously improve strategies in the event of arrests after APEC.



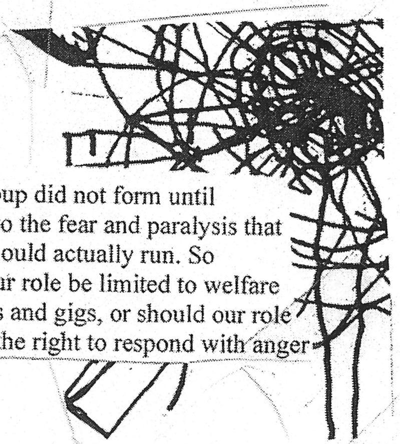
This article contains information about how ORGASN formed and what we have done, as well as some of the complex and challenging issues we have faced. I will also discuss some of the gaps in the campaign and areas we hope to improve.



ts began on the day of the main G20 protest. The following day was a truly terrifying day for most who had been involved in direct action the day before. Undercover cops were everywhere. People nabbed off the street. Outside the Melbourne Museum, heads were cracked, limbs fractured and recklessly pushed by cops while G20 delegates enjoyed their junket inside.



houses were raided and heavy surveillance and arrests took place. Small scale vely immediately by a few people who took statements about the manner and g the arrests. These statements were then reported through independent narchists, Marxist and other non-aligned activists started meeting together



RGASN as a group. The group did not form until These delays were due to the fear and paralysis that political campaign should actually run. So its role: should our role be limited to welfare n, social events and gigs, or should our role pression of the right to respond with anger G20?

Beit:
Not
Bee?

together to defeat the charges. Some people wish s. Others wish to plead not guilty to all charges and d that all future solidarity networks make substantial nd discussion as soon as possible so that the group's

OR
dates.
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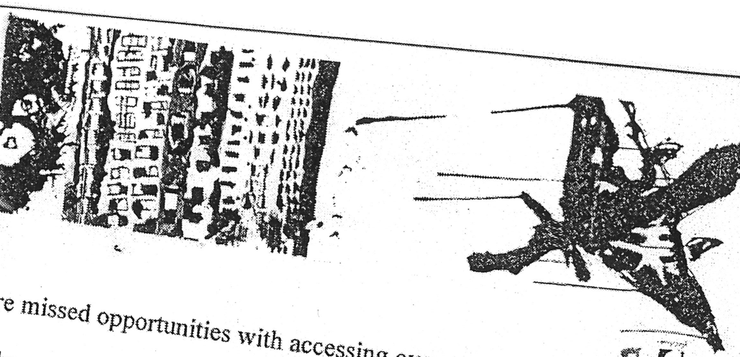
sorts. It does media statements and organises protests for court munity support within the organised left and social movement Alternative and the DSP prioritise the public image of being seen to that they publicly denounced the protest and don't seem to know what



Gaps in the campaigns

- Very little international support. There were missed opportunities with accessing overseas networks
- The campaigns should be but is not driven by arrestees themselves
- Future campaigns could involve interstate speaking tours
- There could be more done to reach out to other groups facing police repression such as Indigenous communities, Muslim communities, the Tamils, etc.
- Too much reliance on lawyers for strategy. This has been depoliticising in various ways. Lawyers have the interests of their individual clients in mind and this can be detrimental to the broader case.

- A more strategic approach is to have a political focus from the very beginning and focus on winning the goal of getting the charges dropped. There is a lot of community support for those who suffer under increased police repression and the war on terror generally.
- Provide political direction to lawyers and don't rely on them to make decisions that have political ramifications for anti-capitalist struggle.
- Organise regular times immediately for arrestees to have regular check-ins, de-briefs and trauma response sessions.

- It's equally important that people don't feel defeated politically, ie, a strong support campaign and engagement with activism will support arrestees to stay strong.

40 years of Occupation

Benny Morris – an Israeli historian who, in an interview, showed that he openly hates Palestinians – wrote of the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, in his book, *Righteous Victims*. He notes that Moshe Dayan and his subordinates decided on a policy of "encouraging emigration". Indeed, so important was this goal, that "no idea or proposal was to be dismissed out of hand". Morris explains that "Israeli thinking was to some degree governed by the notion that the Arabs of the territories, starved of land and resources (primarily water), and denied the possibility of industrial development, would gradually drift away. Though never clearly enunciated, this was the government's aim – especially after 1977". Morris notes that there was "strict censorship", with the prohibition of "all materials deemed seditious".

Morris goes on to describe the features of the occupation:

> Like all occupations, Israel's was founded on brute force, repression and fear, collaboration and treachery, beatings and torture chambers, and daily intimidation, humiliation and manipulation[...] Military administration, uncurbed by the civil rights considerations that applied in Israel, possessed ample measures to suppress dissidence and protest. These included curfews; house arrest, with resulting loss of wages; judicial proceedings, ending in prison terms or fines – the work of the military courts in the territories, and the supreme court which backed them, will surely go down as a dark age in the annals of Israel's judicial system – or expulsions; administrative detentions, or imprisonment without trial, for renewable six-month terms; and commercial and school shutdowns, usually in response to shopkeepers' strikes or disturbances by students.

Morris notes that resistance was met with:

> brutal repression. Midnight sweeps and arrests, beatings, sensory deprivation measures, and simple, old style torture to extract information and confessions; a system of military courts which bore no resemblance to the administration of justice in Western democracies (or, for that matter, in Israel proper); the demolition (or sealing) of suspects' houses; long periods of administrative detention; and deportations – all were systematically employed (pp 338-342).

The facts of the ongoing occupation, and its brutality, are not difficult to find for those who care. Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem routinely issues releases on human rights violations in the occupied territories. In May, it noted that Palestinians are "routinely" abused by settlers in Hebron, where Israel has already "created legal and physical segregation between the Israeli settlers and the Palestinian majority". B'Tselem notes:

> Throughout the Second Intifada, settlers have committed physical assaults, including beatings, at times with clubs, stone throwing, and hurling of refuse, sand, water, chlorine, and empty bottles. Settlers have destroyed shops and doors, committed thefts, and chopped down fruit trees. Settlers have also been involved in gunfire, attempts to run people over, poisoning of a water well, breaking into homes, spilling of hot liquid on the face of a Palestinian, and the killing of a young Palestinian girl.
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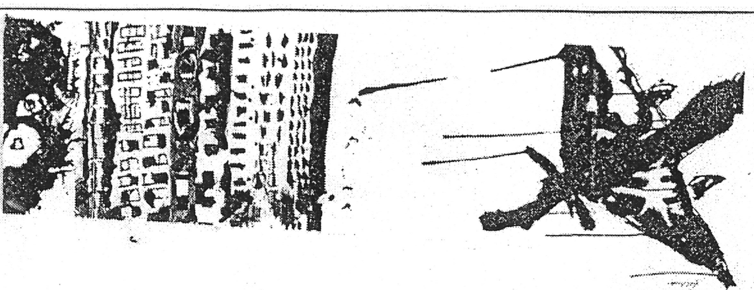
> Soldiers are generally positioned on every street corner in and near the settlement points, but in most cases they do nothing to protect Palestinians from the settlers' attacks. The police also fail to properly enforce the law, and rarely bring the assailants to justice. By failing to respond appropriately to settler violence in Hebron, the authorities in effect sanction the settlers' violent acts. These acts, in addition to being severe, have also contributed to the 'quiet transfer' of thousands of Palestinians from the City Centre.

For some, this alone ought to be scandalous. But there is much else. Those who care about human rights violations, which generally go unreported, might have recently read testimonials of Palestinians severely beaten by Israeli soldiers in the Occupied Territories. But those who care would already know that Israeli soldiers beating, slapping, abusing and humiliating Palestinians is routine – "an integral part of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories… they have become the norm". Israel also has granted itself the right to kill people it feels like, without having convicted them in court of any crime, and without particular worries about the collateral damage. The human rights violations pile up – torturing Palestinians, using Palestinian children as human shields, sonic booms used to collectively punish a terrified civilian population, settlers launching what are effectively pogroms – and much else. The daily humiliations of the checkpoints, and segregated roads. Sticking just to B'Tselem, one can read that, "forty-one sections of roads in the West Bank, covering a distance of some 700 km, are restricted to Palestinian traffic, while Israelis are allowed to travel on them freely". One can read that in 2006, "there were about 470 physical obstacles blocking roads":



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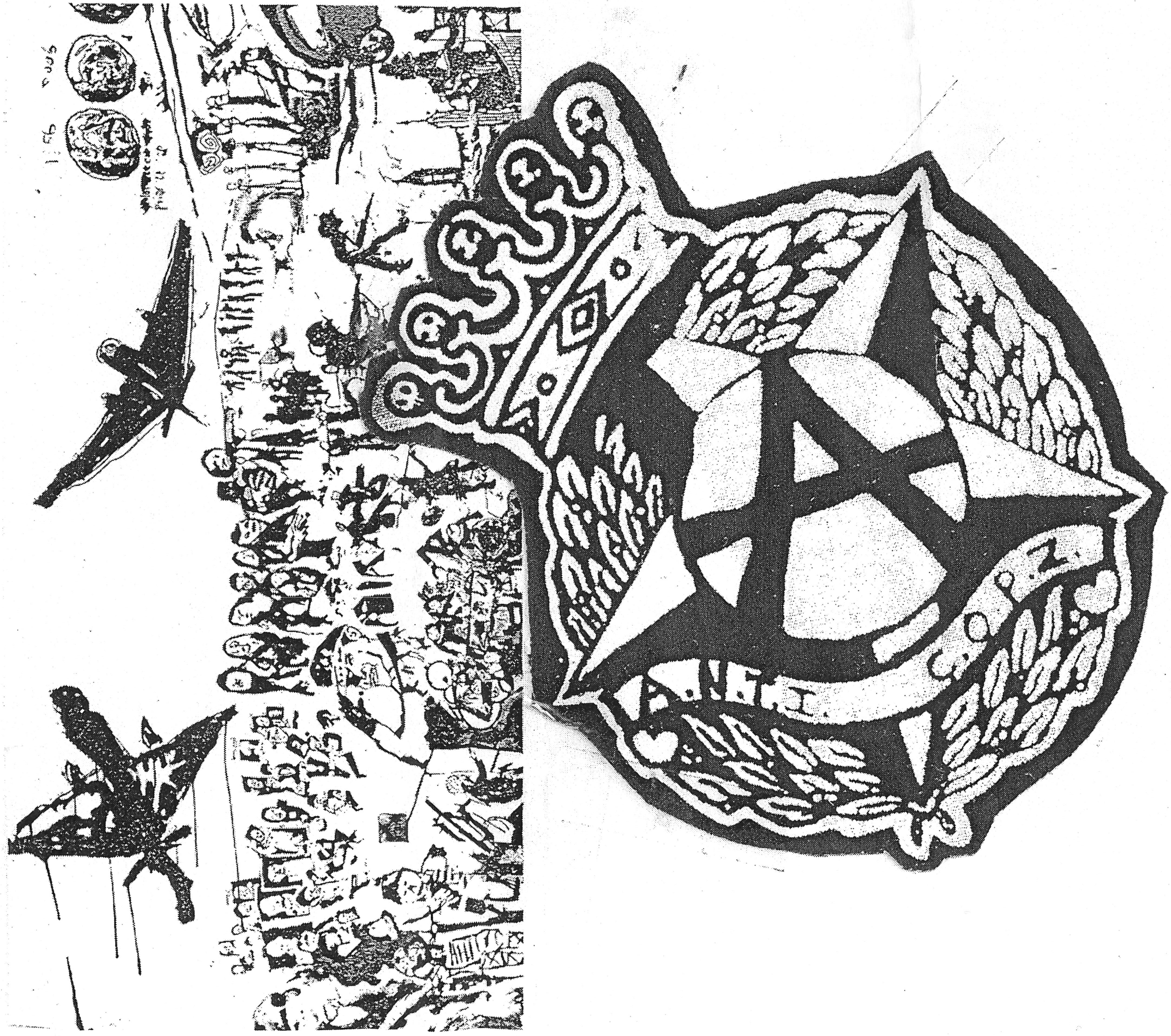

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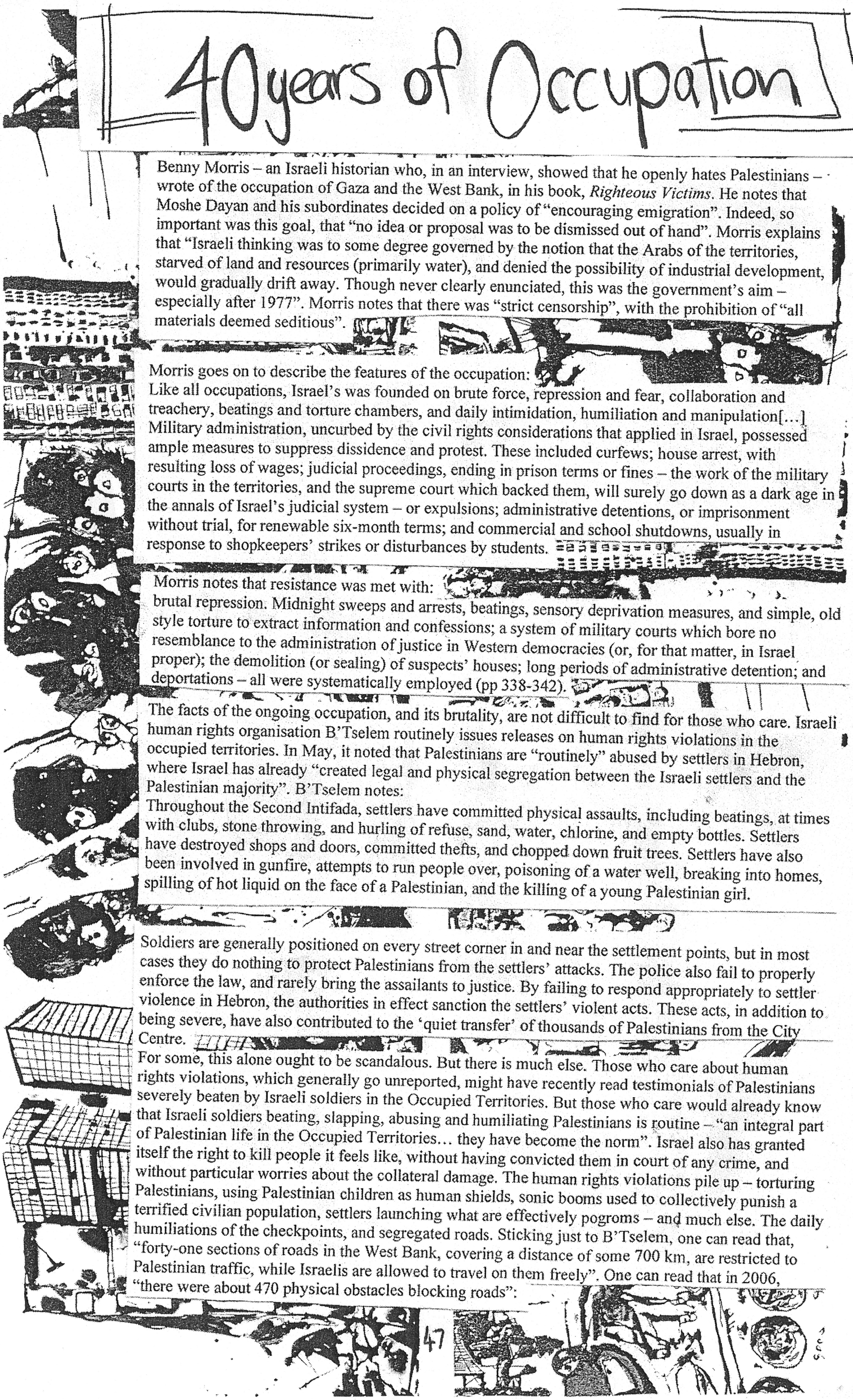

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Prolonged checks and searches carried out by soldiers at the staffed checkpoints, and the accompanying degradation and long lines that resulted, deter Palestinians from using even some roads that are open to them.[…]

Israel's policy greatly affects all areas of life for Palestinians in the West Bank and makes it impossible for them to live normal lives. Simple actions such as shopping, visiting relatives, and attending university classes have become complicated and, at times, impossible. This policy also impedes Palestinians' access to medical care. […]

The restrictions on movement also make it difficult to market goods inside the West Bank and thus harm the Palestinian economy (the marketing of Palestinian goods in Israel has also sharply declined since the outbreak of the Second Intifada). […]

One of the main purposes of the policy to restrict Palestinian movement is to protect Israeli settlers. Given that the settlements are illegal, the policy only aggravates the situation: it comprehensively and disproportionately impedes the freedom of movement of an entire population in order to perpetuate the settlement enterprise. If the restrictions were intended to prevent attacks inside Israel, and not in the settlements, the policy would still be illegal because it is sweeping and disproportionate, giving it a semblance of collective punishment which is forbidden.

Furthermore, Israel's policy is based on the assumption that every single Palestinian is a security threat, thereby justifying restrictions on his or her freedom of movement. This assumption is racist and leads to the sweeping violation of the human rights of an entire population on the basis of national origin. One then reads that these restrictions "are the principal cause of deterioration of the Palestinian economy and the unprecedented increase in unemployment and poverty in the Occupied Territories".

If one turns to Amnesty International's latest annual report, you'll read:
The damaging impact of the prolonged blockades and movement restrictions was compounded by the Israeli authorities' confiscation of tax duties due to the PA [Palestinian Authority] - some US$50 million a month, equivalent to half of the PA's administration budget. As a result, humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Territories deteriorated to an unprecedented level, marked by a rise in extreme poverty, food aid dependency, high unemployment, malnutrition and other health problems among the Palestinian population.
Also, as should be obvious by now,
impunity remained widespread for Israeli soldiers and settlers responsible for unlawful killings, ill-treatment and other abuses of human rights of Palestinians and attacks against their property. Investigations and prosecutions relating to such abuses were rare and usually only occurred when the abuses were exposed by human rights organizations and the media.
Amnesty notes:
Israel continued to expand illegal Israeli settlements and stepped up construction of a 700 km fence/wall, 80 percent of which runs inside the occupied West Bank, including in and around East Jerusalem. Large areas of Palestinian land were seized and utilized for this purpose.

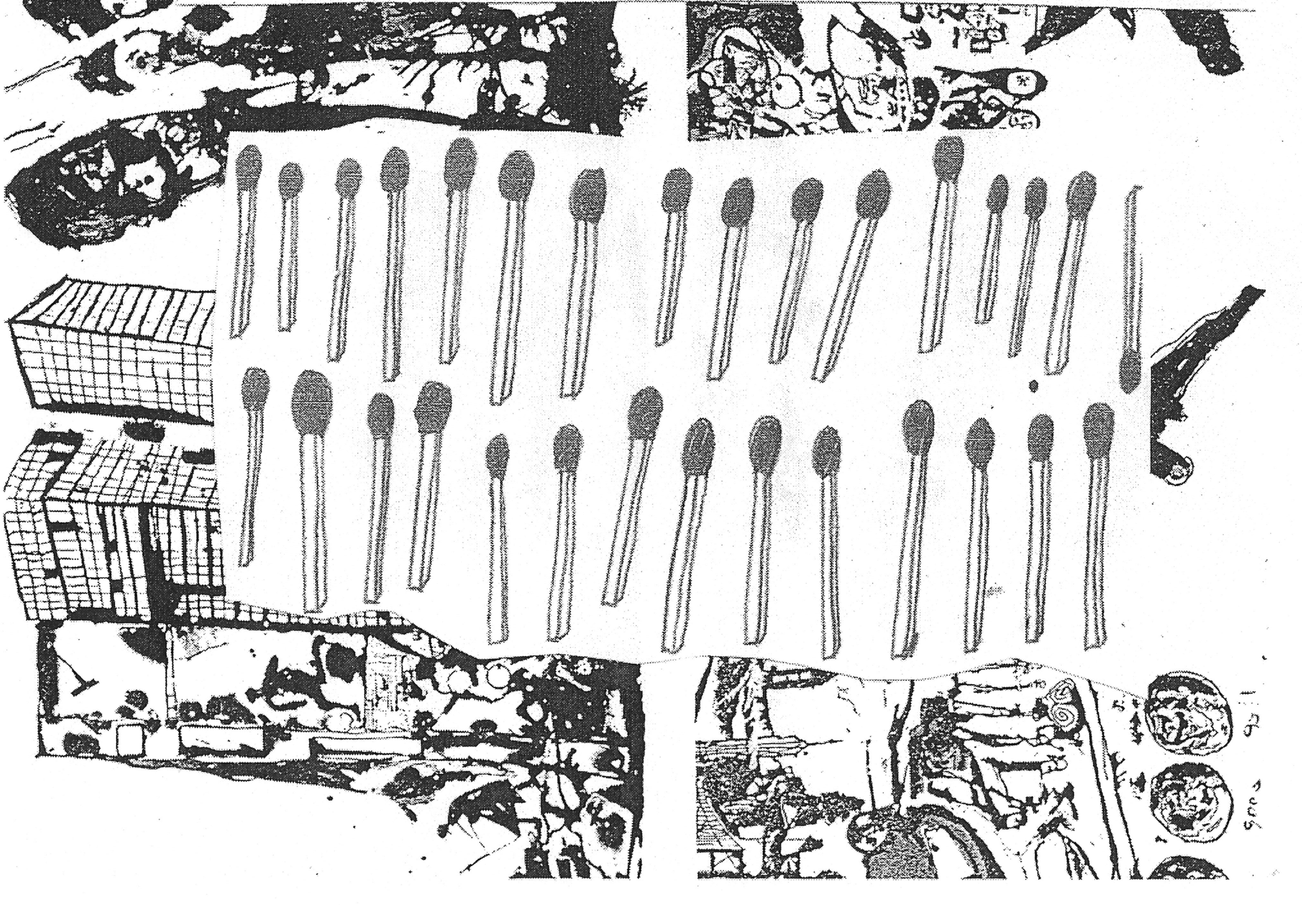
On the Apartheid Wall – or, for those who prefer, Apartheid fence – Amnesty again has called for its dismantlement. Ruled to be illegal by the International Court of Justice, the late Baruch Kimmerling – eminent Israeli sociologist – noted the ignorant defences of the Apartheid Wall, and that, whilst Israel is entitled to defend itself against terrorism, it must do so whilst obeying international law. Or, as Norman Finkelstein puts it, anyone has a right to build a fence between neighbours. The fence, however, has to be on the border of the neighbours. If someone claims to want to build a fence for security reasons, but then it happens to snake around into someone's land, and around their swimming pool – the claims of security become dubious, and it becomes plainly an exercise in grabbing land and resources.

This would-be unilateral plan for annexing the parts of the West Bank Israel wants, and determining the fate of the two peoples simply through its superior power is of course objectionable to those who believe in human rights and equality. But this racist arrogance is not new. Israel conquered the West Bank and Gaza in the June 1967 war, but never enfranchised the millions of Palestinians it continues to rule. That Israelis get self-determination but those in the occupied territories did not, and still do not, is why, as Baruch Kimmerling put it *Politicide*, Israel is a Herrenvolk democracy. An apartheid state, as noted by people who know a thing or two about the evils of apartheid. When the Intifada made maintaining the occupation difficult and costly, the duties of policing the Palestinian population and keeping them in line was transferred to Fatah – which continues to be notoriously corrupt under the crooked Holocaust denier Mahmoud Abbas. The closest the Palestinians came to self-determination of 22% of historic Palestine was from 2000-2001. First, at Camp David, Arafat rejected an offer which Israeli chief negotiator Shlomo Ben-Ami says he also would have rejected. Then Israel cancelled the subsequent negotiations at Taba, after moving closer to Arafat's terms. Of course, Israel, with American support, had been blocking the two-state solution for decades by that point – as it continues to do, against the will of practically the entire world community, including the leadership of the PLO, as expressed in routine UN votes.

The two-state solution – whilst not perfect – is breathtakingly straightforward. Israel rules over all of historic Palestine, but has only given human rights to those in the territories it has held since 1967 (putting aside systematic discrimination against Palestinians within Israel). Israel has a choice of enfranchising all Palestinians it rules – or ending its rule of Palestinians in the occupied territories. So, either it remains an apartheid state, it enfranchises the Palestinians in the occupied territories, or it lets the Palestinians have their own free, independent state in Gaza and the West Bank. Israel, for forty years, has opted for an apartheid state. It continues to colonise desired Palestinian land. But it hasn't – and won't – annexe the occupied territories. If it were to annexe them, Israel, with its supposed commitment to democracy, would have to give the Palestinians in the currently occupied territories the vote. But then – alas – Israel would not have a Jewish majority, which is ever so important. This would be "destroying" the Jewish state – what Israelis and Zionists openly call the "demographic problem". What I have never seen mentioned anywhere is that the "demographic problem" is a euphemism for racial purity. The view that a Jewish state needs to have a majority of Jews, and is insufficiently racially pure if, for example, the Palestinian refugees are allowed to return to their homes, is why the Palestinians were expelled from their homes in the first place in 1948. It is why Israel has been ethnically cleansing Palestinians from the occupied territories since the start of the occupation – or, in the euphemistic words of Dayan, quoted by Morris, encouraging emigration from the occupied territories. Dayan, of course, was not always so demure. As Chomsky notes:

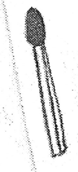
At a Rafi meeting of September 1967, there was a dispute between Peres and Dayan after Dayan explained more fully his position with regard to the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories: "Let us approach them and say that we have no solution, that you shall continue to live like dogs, and whoever wants to can leave -- and we will see where this process leads." After they have lived "like dogs" under Israeli military occupation, Dayan continued, "It is possible that in five years we will have 200,000 less people – and that is a matter of enormous importance." Peres objected to Dayan's advice that Israel become "like Rhodesia", arguing that these measures would harm Israel's international image and prospects for immigration. For these tactical reasons, he argued, it is necessary to preserve Israel's "moral stand". Dayan's response was: "Ben-Gurion said that anyone who approaches the Zionist problem from a moral aspect, he is not a Zionist." He continued to advocate the Rhodesian solution.

For those outraged that Palestinians continue to live like dogs – and the discussion of the horrors of Israeli terrorism against the Palestinians could be greatly extended – we must demand an end to the occupation now. The scandal is not just Israeli oppression and atrocities. It is the sheer ignorance of the suffering of the Palestinians, and the poverty that Israel is wilfully inflicting on the Palestinians for the purpose of changing their political commitments, that is to say open terrorism, which the media refuses to cover. The occupation is a continued racist crime against millions of Palestinians. We must fight for its immediate end.

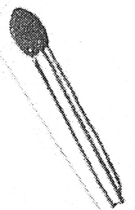


pigs in the pacific, tanks in the NT : Aus the occupying force

In 2003, Australia led a 'regional assistance' into the Solomon Islands, and has since been pushing economic and military interventions in the Pacific region. Australia's 'humanitarian intervention' in the pacific equates to a new face of colonialism, that aims at controlling policy, legislation and resources rather than gaining territorial possession – colonialism that aims at governance rather than government.

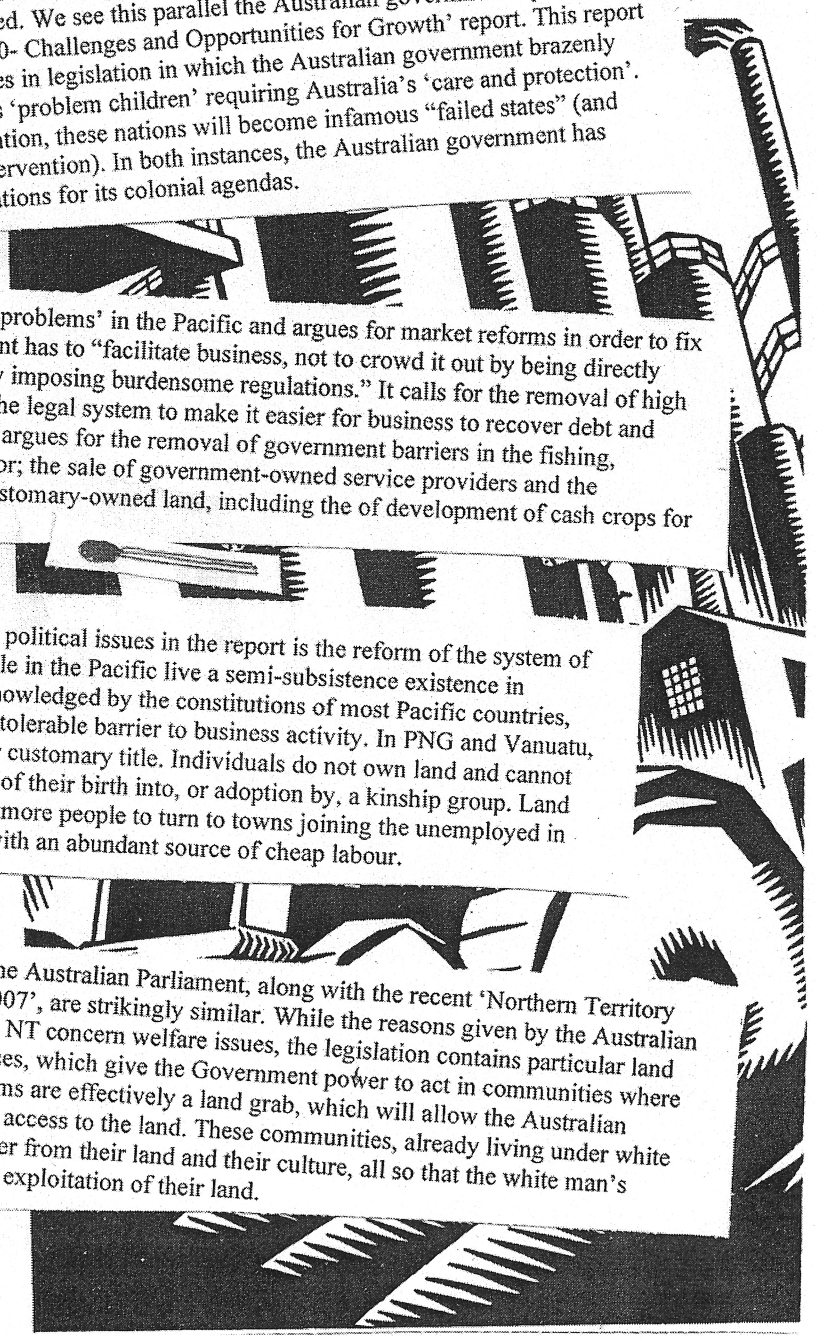


Since the publication of this original article on Australian colonialism in the pacific, the Australian Government launched a renewed colonial assault on the Indigenous peoples of this land, with a military invasion of various Northern Territory Indigenous communities. It has become clear that the actions of the Australian Government, both in the Pacific and the Northern Territory, are part of the same neo-liberal agenda, one pursued with military force. This edited version draws a parallel between these two colonial interventions.



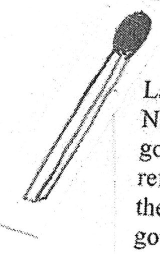
The Australian government has used the rhetoric of 'failed states' and 'nation-building' as an attempt to justify pre-emptive military and/or police invasions in the Pacific. These have been established through the publication and implementation of the 'Pacific2020', a 15-year plan released by the Australian Government to 'help' Pacific countries 'accelerate economic growth in the Pacific, Papua New Guinea and East Timor'. This rhetoric is indeed the very same imperialist rhetoric used by the US in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more broadly, in the current global state known as the 'war on terror'.

In the NT the Australian government is employing the same paternalistic rhetoric – that Indigenous communities are unable to care for themselves\ and equate to 'failed communities'. Thus, Australian military intervention is (supposedly) justified. We see this parallel the Australian government's policies in the Pacific, as illustrated in the 'Pacific2020- Challenges and Opportunities for Growth' report. This report makes explicit policies and calls for changes in legislation in which the Australian government brazenly constructs the island states of the Pacific as 'problem children' requiring Australia's 'care and protection'. It suggests that without Australian intervention, these nations will become infamous "failed states" (and thus require further Australian military intervention). In both instances, the Australian government has carefully constructed the apparent justifications for its colonial agendas.

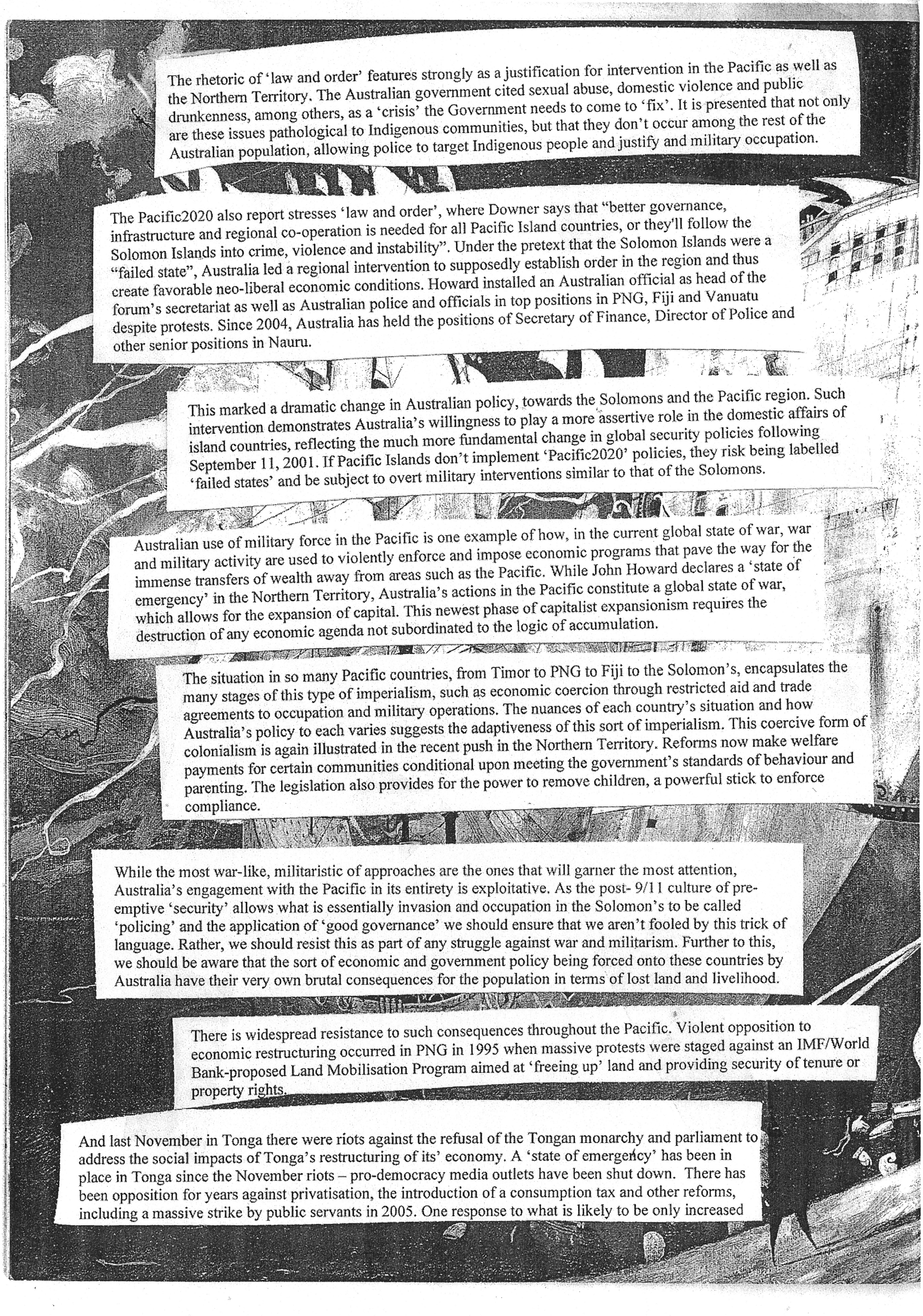


The 'Pacific2020' lists various 'social problems' in the Pacific and argues for market reforms in order to fix them. The report insists that government has to "facilitate business, not to crowd it out by being directly involved in commercial activities or by imposing burdensome regulations." It calls for the removal of high taxes and regulations, and changes to the legal system to make it easier for business to recover debt and enforce contracts. More specifically, it argues for the removal of government barriers in the fishing, mining, petroleum and agriculture sector; the sale of government-owned service providers and the facilitation of foreign investment on customary-owned land, including the of development of cash crops for export.

Potentially one of the most explosive social and political issues in the report is the reform of the system of communal land titles. The vast majority of people in the Pacific live a semi-subsistence existence in traditional villages. These communities are acknowledged by the constitutions of most Pacific countries, which, as far as investors are concerned, is an intolerable barrier to business activity. In PNG and Vanuatu, for example, 97 percent of the land is held under customary title. Individuals do not own land and cannot sell it, but rather have rights to use land because of their birth into, or adoption by, a kinship group. Land reform legislation will inevitably lead to forcing more people to turn to towns joining the unemployed in the shantytowns and provide private enterprise with an abundant source of cheap labour.



Land reform being rammed through the Australian Parliament, along with the recent 'Northern Territory National Emergency Response Bill 2007', are strikingly similar. While the reasons given by the Australian government for the intervention in the NT concern welfare issues, the legislation contains particular land reforms to currently held 99-years leases, which give the Government power to act in communities where they otherwise would not. These reforms are effectively a land grab, which will allow the Australian government to give mining companies access to the land. These communities, already living under white man's law, are being forced even further from their land and their culture, all so that the white man's government can profit from the further exploitation of their land.



The rhetoric of 'law and order' features strongly as a justification for intervention in the Pacific as well as the Northern Territory. The Australian government cited sexual abuse, domestic violence and public drunkenness, among others, as a 'crisis' the Government needs to come to 'fix'. It is presented that not only are these issues pathological to Indigenous communities, but that they don't occur among the rest of the Australian population, allowing police to target Indigenous people and justify and military occupation.

The Pacific2020 also report stresses 'law and order', where Downer says that "better governance, infrastructure and regional co-operation is needed for all Pacific Island countries, or they'll follow the Solomon Islands into crime, violence and instability". Under the pretext that the Solomon Islands were a "failed state", Australia led a regional intervention to supposedly establish order in the region and thus create favorable neo-liberal economic conditions. Howard installed an Australian official as head of the forum's secretariat as well as Australian police and officials in top positions in PNG, Fiji and Vanuatu despite protests. Since 2004, Australia has held the positions of Secretary of Finance, Director of Police and other senior positions in Nauru.

This marked a dramatic change in Australian policy, towards the Solomons and the Pacific region. Such intervention demonstrates Australia's willingness to play a more assertive role in the domestic affairs of island countries, reflecting the much more fundamental change in global security policies following September 11, 2001. If Pacific Islands don't implement 'Pacific2020' policies, they risk being labelled 'failed states' and be subject to overt military interventions similar to that of the Solomons.

Australian use of military force in the Pacific is one example of how, in the current global state of war, war and military activity are used to violently enforce and impose economic programs that pave the way for the immense transfers of wealth away from areas such as the Pacific. While John Howard declares a 'state of emergency' in the Northern Territory, Australia's actions in the Pacific constitute a global state of war, which allows for the expansion of capital. This newest phase of capitalist expansionism requires the destruction of any economic agenda not subordinated to the logic of accumulation.

The situation in so many Pacific countries, from Timor to PNG to Fiji to the Solomon's, encapsulates the many stages of this type of imperialism, such as economic coercion through restricted aid and trade agreements to occupation and military operations. The nuances of each country's situation and how Australia's policy to each varies suggests the adaptiveness of this sort of imperialism. This coercive form of colonialism is again illustrated in the recent push in the Northern Territory. Reforms now make welfare payments for certain communities conditional upon meeting the government's standards of behaviour and parenting. The legislation also provides for the power to remove children, a powerful stick to enforce compliance.

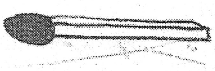
While the most war-like, militaristic of approaches are the ones that will garner the most attention, Australia's engagement with the Pacific in its entirety is exploitative. As the post- 9/11 culture of pre-emptive 'security' allows what is essentially invasion and occupation in the Solomon's to be called 'policing' and the application of 'good governance' we should ensure that we aren't fooled by this trick of language. Rather, we should resist this as part of any struggle against war and militarism. Further to this, we should be aware that the sort of economic and government policy being forced onto these countries by Australia have their very own brutal consequences for the population in terms of lost land and livelihood.

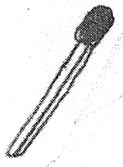
There is widespread resistance to such consequences throughout the Pacific. Violent opposition to economic restructuring occurred in PNG in 1995 when massive protests were staged against an IMF/World Bank-proposed Land Mobilisation Program aimed at 'freeing up' land and providing security of tenure or property rights.

And last November in Tonga there were riots against the refusal of the Tongan monarchy and parliament to address the social impacts of Tonga's restructuring of its' economy. A 'state of emergency' has been in place in Tonga since the November riots – pro-democracy media outlets have been shut down. There has been opposition for years against privatisation, the introduction of a consumption tax and other reforms, including a massive strike by public servants in 2005. One response to what is likely to be only increased resistance throughout the Pacific has been from Kevin Rudd, who has suggested withdrawing Australian troops from Iraq so that they can be deployed in the Pacific.

By examining how this security culture and militarism exist beyond Iraq, we also place our own lives within it rather than being somehow separate. And certainly Australian militarism exists internally as well as externally. The Terrorism Investigation Unit and the Public order and Riot Squad are relatively new creations, a solid outcome of the move towards a more militarised policing justified under the same rhetoric of 'terrorism', 'security' and 'stability'.

Also, the Redfern Redevelopment sees such policing firmly intersect with a good old neo-liberal land grab. While different because of it's unique proximity to the CBD, there are also some similarities between this forced 'development' of community-owned land with the theft of communal land throughout Pacific nations such as in Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Additionally, the privatisation of public services such as education here are being matched or exceeded in places like Fiji. Again, the recent invasion of the police and military into various NT communities illustrates the Australian governments ease at employing military force, in order to achieve its neo-liberal agenda.



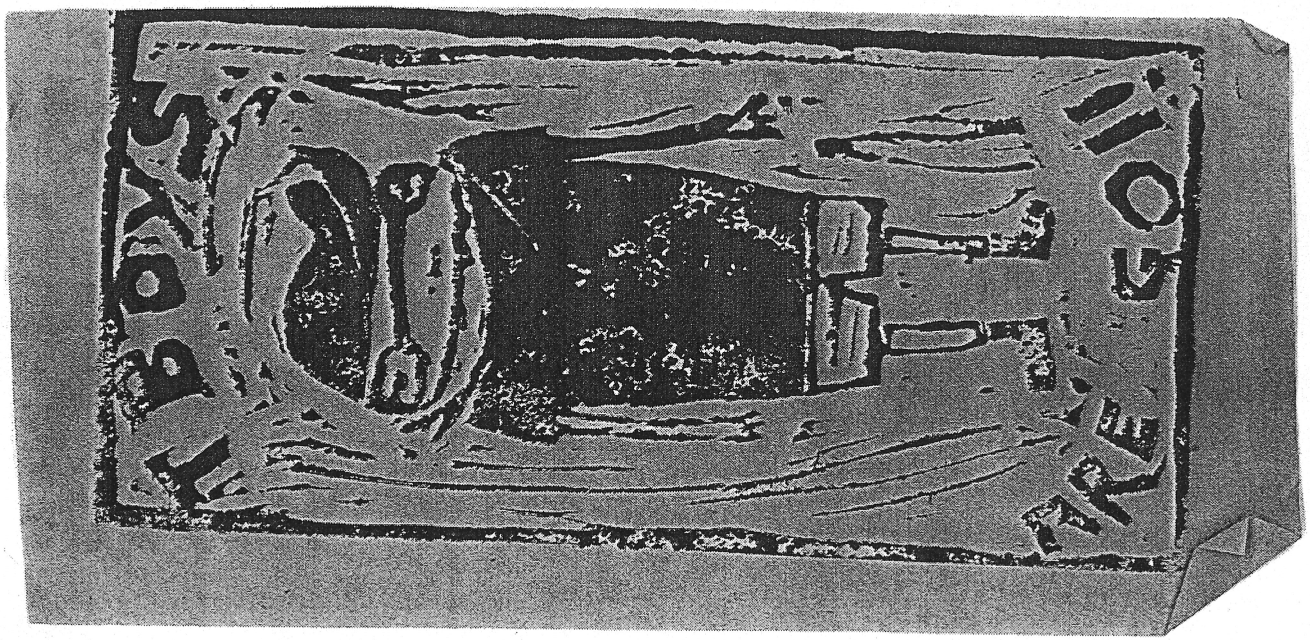


People resisting imperialism, militarism and neo-liberalism in the Pacific are geographically our closest comrades and there is potential for ongoing alliances to be built. One solid example: Fijian civil servants voted to strike in March 2007 against the military junta's proposed 5 percent pay cut and elimination of thousands of public sector jobs through the reduction of the retirement age from 60 to 55.

It's vital that we in Australia think about these issues and act in solidarity with the struggles of our neighbours– not because of moral concern about what 'our' government is doing to other people, but because they're our struggles too.

Similarly, we must recognise the ongoing resistance of the Indigenous people of this land – a people who have never stopped resisting white colonialism, but who now, more than ever, need our ongoing support and solidarity to resist the most recent attacks on their people and their land. Barbara Shaw, Tangentyere Council, community and health worker, and resident at Mt Nancy Town Camp in Alice Springs stated that "this big fight and struggle is not going to stop here, because it's going to carry on in the generations to come". Let's stand up and do all we can to ensure that the Indigenous people of this land will no longer face brutal racist attacks from the Australian government.

by mutiny



Manifesto

By Malgré Tout Collective

1. The End of History

The times of revolutionary politics are over, we are told, because messianic time isdead. But in fact, it's just the opposite: today, a libertarian politics can only exist precisely if it is able to rid itself of messianic time. One no longer struggles for the advent of the end of history or the transparent reign of freedom, simply because freedom is not astate that can be reached, but rather an act that it is necessary to incarnate. Thus, struggle is truly political when freedom acts. This is why free acts are so rare and the promises of freedom so frequent. Along with messianic time, a politics of non-domination should rid itself of the master liberators who promise freedom in the future in exchange for subservience today. Modernity conceived messianic time under the mythical figure of progressivism, which implied that thanks to progress in all the different forms of life –the technical, economical, social and political-- man would become increasingly free. And this was so because, according to the teachings of Marxism, it was the material life of a community that determined the consciousness of its inhabitants. And indeed, it's true that consciousness is overdetermined, except that it does not identify itself with freedom. In his situation, Spartacus did not act less freely than Ché.

It's not by instituting new ways of living that we will become increasingly free, but the opposite: it's by acting freely that we can invent new modes of life. The same can be said about reason and justice. The point is not to reach, at the end of history, a more just and rational world. Reason and justice are not the goals of rebellion but its causes. If we are right to rebel, it's because there is a reason, a truth, a justice in our rebelliousness.

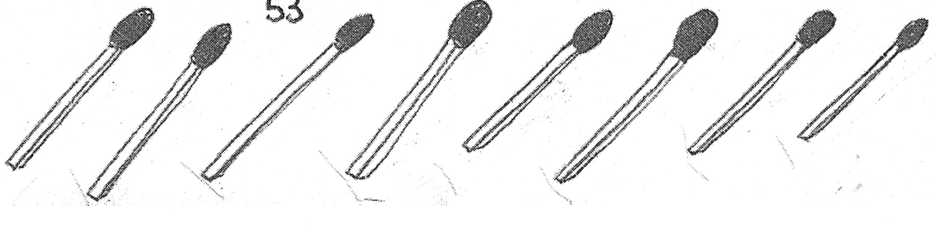
Anyway, we should not ask ourselves what do we have to do so that humanity is free one day, but instead, what do we have to do in order to be free here and now. This is why we prefer to talk about "restricted action." Restricted action seeks to part with that dialectical view according to which today's revolt is validated or justified by a becoming of the world in its globality. What is broken is not libertarian politics, but rather the epic narrative in which the progressive forces defeat the reactionary ones and once and for all eradicate scarcity, exploitation, barbarism, and suffering. History has not ended, simply because it never ends. But if it must be a matter of ends, what has ended is precisely messianic time, or history with an end.

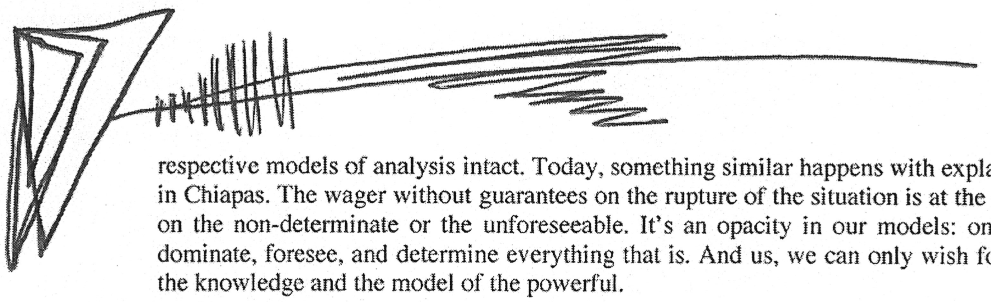
2. Restricted Action

Restricted action is political practice without messianic promise. It is, in situation, a wager without guarantees on the rupture of the *status quo*. This absence of guarantees is what separates it from any type of vanguardism.

Always dependent on the progressivist model, the military role of the vanguard was to show the points where a situation had to be attacked in order to attain, through its destruction, the political objective of a new status quo, completely different from the preceding one and supposedly better. Thus, the vanguard was imprisoned in a deterministic ideology according to which, once the correlation of forces of the moment was known, the future would become analytically foreseeable. Hence, the vanguard was capable of jumping outside the situation in order to look at history as the progressive unfolding of a plan: the future appeared to be as necessary as the past, and the revolution a mere acceleration of historical time. In turn, this had as a consequence the reduction of freedom here and now: the reduction of the revolutionary decision, its invention, and its novelty, to ineluctable necessity, something as foreseeable as Judas' treason was for God.

The idea that a state of affairs subsequent to the current situation is foreseeable resupposes that the laws of historical progress are knowable. Two possibilities follow: either every new event is reduced to a "fact" that can be explained and represented according to the parameters of a model; or, if the event is not anticipated by the model, then it does not exist. Sartre had observed this in relation to the analysis that Marxists made of the Hungarian revolt of 1956: before having done any research, before starting to think about what had happened there, the event already fit within the framework of possibilities envisaged by the official model. For some, it was a counterrevolutionary reaction that in the context of the Cold War could only have been supported by Western capitalism; for others, the Trotskyites, it was a working class rebellion against the Stalinist bureaucracy. In either case, however, nothing new had happened: it was a foreseeable fact because it left the



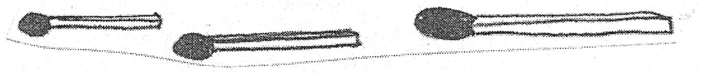


respective models of analysis intact. Today, something similar happens with explanations of the Zapatista revolt in Chiapas. The wager without guarantees on the rupture of the situation is at the same time a wager on chance, on the non-determinate or the unforeseeable. It's an opacity in our models: only the powerful can aspire to dominate, foresee, and determine everything that is. And us, we can only wish for that event which detotalizes the knowledge and the model of the powerful.

But the point is not to have an irrationalist vocation; rather, it's a matter of undoing the old alliance between rationality and determinism. As a matter of fact, there is no reason to identify the historical rebels with vanguards or with powerful progressivists. When the revolutionaries engaged in action and thought, they asked themselves what could they do in history that was free and radical. But immediately a master liberator would appear and declare: "We are making history, we are leading humanity toward its salvation." And as a result of having one eye in the present and the other one in the future, the Left has become squint-eyed... For this reason, we cannot but appreciate the words of Zapatista subcommander Marcos when he compares his revolt with the writing of a poem: far from banal scepticism, his comparison separates him from the logic of means and ends. Mallarmé certainly revolutionized poetic language, but he, however, only sought to do something absolutely revolutionary in poetry. The promise of a better world can no longer legitimate political action. Or, to put it differently, the end does not justify the means. We cannot continue to eat the cannibals in order to put an end to cannibalism. From the moment that a restricted action becomes a global action, it cannot help but think in terms of an army of the good and, consequently, in terms of a good barbarism.

Thus, during the years of the Cold War, many believed it was necessary to support the Soviet Union, "the universal homeland of socialism," in spite of Stalin's crimes. Who cared if millions died, if the world would finally be happy! But this does not mean that it's necessary to confront the old revolutionary foundations with the bourgeois democratic legality of human rights and the reactionary slogan of "saving the body," as humanists propose in order to de-politicize situations, so that there is no longer a subject but only body-objects to be saved. (In fact, restricted action does not exclude violence, but rather armed power or domination.) Indeed, today we are presented with a model that is content with being a caricatured inversion of the previous one: the messiah has been replaced by the apocalypse. It's as if the future gave us nothing but barbaric and threatening messages. And this is an excuse for leaving things as they are and limit any political action to a bourgeois-democratic defense of human rights, of constituted legality, and majoritarian consensus. In the postmodern vision of the end of history, this is the best of the possible worlds, because any other can only offer us prodigious barbarism. In this way, political action is no longer justified by a future good but by an evil always ready to come back. As such, it does not even have its own initiative: political action has become pure reaction in the face of the worse. This is the trap in which unfortunately many "anti" groups fall.

3. The World of the Spectacle



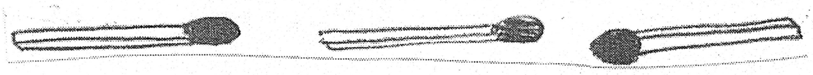
Thus, people occupy the position of jurors-spectators --or public opinion--condemning or approving the behavior of others, the true public actors. They are not men and women who freely build a different life; rather, they are the public, represented by an opinion poll, a graph, figures. The goal is not to divide consciences but to gain support or consensus, not to incite thought but to excite common sense and opinion. This is why this spectator-individual no longer conceives themself as immersed in a situation; he is neither worker, nor woman, nor immigrant, nor disabled person, but rather an illusory transhistorical and trans-situational consciousness. Although his judgement of what happens is indelibly linked to the common sense or the consensual norm of a particular epoch, it is nonetheless lived as simply "human."

The spectator-individual is a particularly effective invention of the era of mass media. Indeed, a media or communicational mechanism is characterized by the construction of three places: the addresser, the addressee, and the referent or "reality" that is communicated. In the mass media, the addresser is generally anonymous. Who writes the wire or the news? Who is the "objective" of the camera? The addressee, in turn, is the majority viewpoint. Thus the worker, the woman, the immigrant, the disabled person are transformed into spectator-individuals when they occupy the place of the message's addressee. To occupy this place means to accept all the discursive presuppositions without which the message could not be decoded: in other words, the acceptance of an entire common sense. To become addressee, it's necessary to abandon the being in situation to become a "common person," a "person from the street," not more and not less than a dominant or majority gaze. Finally, the referent or "reality" constructed by the media is not the concrete situation of the worker, the woman, the immigrant, or the disabled person, but "the world." The "world" is an ensemble of facts: wars, genocide, famines, petty crimes, the dollar crisis, ecological disasters, meteorological bulletins, football matches or film releases, presented without an idea of continuity and without historical or situational contextualization. The "world" is everything that constitutes an opinion topic and is part of everyday communication and sociability.

Thus, many progressive people ask themselves: what can we do about what is happening in the world? What can we do in the face of events such as the Rwanda massacre, the hole in the ozone layer, or American interventionism? The answer may seem disappointing: nothing. Because this ensemble of facts that is called "the world" is a construction aimed at the spectator-individual and not to the person in situation. In other words, such a world does not exist outside the discursive presuppositions that constitute it. Hence, we cannot accept such a world without accepting at the same time its presuppositions, without occupying the place of the receiver or spectator-individual. It's necessary to choose: either world or situation, because they are two mutually exclusive realities, in the same way that the individual and the political subject exclude each other. Is this an acknowledgement of the impotence of restricted, situational action in front of the world? Just the opposite: it's the "world" what reduces any political action to impotence, because it removes it from concrete action. Which means that the mass media's concern with the world not only puts us in a position of impotence in the face of its spectacle, but it also anesthetizes us and prevents us from acting right where we can do it: namely, in our situation.

Thus, restricted action is opposed to any vain desire for power, to any omnipotent messianism which, from a quasi-delirious position, looks at the world as it is and dictates how it should be. If restricted action is a praxis in and for the situation, it's because its delimitation and its terms are not equivalent to information provided by the mass media. What comes to be presented as the situation must be simultaneously the fruit of an investigation, of a thought, and of a praxis which allows us to say: if this is the structure of the situation in question, then this will be our wager. When that is the case, even mistakes will be part of a moment in the reconstruction of a praxis of freedom. In this sense, it's necessary to be categorical: the "world" as a totality of facts is a media illusion. There is only a multiplicity of situations, each of which relates to a problem, to a concrete universal that radically distinguishes itself from the "world" as arbitrary totality.

4. The World of Capital

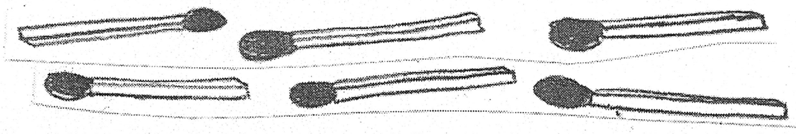


The other temptation that has dominated the modern theory and praxis of political action is the idea that there is a situation that subsumes all the others. From this perspective, sexual repression, racial discrimination, the phallocentric submission of women, the institutionalization of the insane, the normalization of marginals, and all other social conflicts were subordinated to one big foundational struggle: class struggle. Or, to put it in a different way, all the situations were superstructural in relation to a basic structural situation: capitalism and its globalization. Of course, the point is not to negate capitalist exploitation, the tyranny of capital, or the worship of the commodity. In our opinion, the mistake is to believe that the medicalization of subjectivity, racial discrimination, the codification of the family, the "technologization" of life and other realities of our times are the consequence of a mode of production. What numerous historical investigations allow us to corroborate today is that these modes of being, acting, knowing, and even loving, arose from historical ruptures that preceded the appearance and institution of capitalism as mode of production and exchange of commodities. Thus, it would not be a mistake to speak today of a "capitalistic" era, in which multiple situations come together and connect with each other. The working class situation is therefore a concrete universal that a certain Left has turned into an abstract one, to the detriment of workers' struggles and other struggles. For the same reason, one cannot oppose to capitalism a global alternative situation called "socialism." As Marx himself taught us, it was capitalism itself that, by universalizing market exchange, created what we nowadays call the "world." The world as globality does not exist without the flattening of every concrete situation --something that is qualitatively different from the quantitative violence of the commodity. The argument about the "complexity" of today's world, which regards any attempt to transform it as vain, is a consequence of the failure derived from acting at the level of a globality or of a world-system. It is the illusion produced by the reduction of the situational multiplicity to a single explanatory principle. Among the main figures of current common sense provoking the anguish of people while ensuring and structuring their impotence are clichés such as: "the world is becoming increasingly smaller" or "in this *fin-de-siècle* everything is accelerated" or even "time flies." These are all themes that characterize the painful experience structuring the subjectivity of our contemporaries.

If the world is increasingly smaller, if we cannot go anywhere because everything is always "in the same place," then the trappings of the structure that hinders every free act become visible. But when we add to this a dizzying pace of time, the trap is finally closed. These phrases, proper to the society of the spectacle, fit perfectly within the logic of the commodity: they are statements from a world founded on the quest for profit and efficiency. Indeed, the world is small, minuscule even, when we think of it through the problem of overproduction of commodities that are impossible to sell. The joke about "selling refrigerators to the Eskimos" is a reality of the world of the commodity, which is always becoming narrower. This is why the refrigerator, like any commodity, must be perishable, for even before the Eskimo has paid the second instalment, a new model will be coming out of the factories. Thus, time becomes dizzying, time does not give time to time: such is the barbarism of a society structured on the basis of the production of commodities.

This world is reflected in the ideology of the societies of the spectacle: our contemporaries perceive themselves as "productive units" not only in the economic sphere, but also in the affective, bodily, social, etc. Thus they find themselves trapped in this freedom-killing vision which separates them from their concrete situations. The world then appears to be divided into two categories, according to a truly supermarketstyle Darwinism: on the one hand is the large mass of exhausted people (the acceleration of time and the shrinkage of space constitute, strictly speaking, the experience of depression), and on the other hand are the strong, enterprising, and productive people, who dominate the world but do so in constant anguish of falling into the first group. It's not surprising that the concrete considerations of people in situation do not figure in this spectacular vision, given the fact that what characterizes all consensual dominant ideologies is that they make such considerations disappear. The statement "the world is one and is increasingly smaller" is the totalitarian proposition that tends to conceal that reality is infinite in its dimensions and possibilities.

To say that everything is similar and that everything is small is a reactionary profession of faith whose effects on reality are very serious. That time escapes from our hands, because of its peculiar acceleration at the end of the century, is a socio-historical pseudo-corroboration that seeks to conceal the fact that every day can contain an eternity. The fact is that, in a month of insurrections, in a few years of autonomous experience, or in all those events in which the free subject acts, the long-standing suspicion that eternity takes refuge between the minutes of the clock is confirmed.



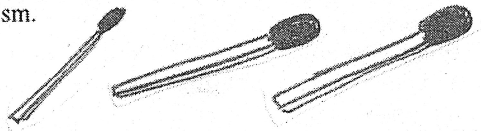
5. The Concrete Universal

We are now going to define what we understand by "concrete universal." We say it's restricted political action that, on the base of a concrete situation, proceeds toward a universal rupture at the level of its quality and structure. We say universal because, unlike a global model that ignores the particularity of the elements of the situation, it questions the foundational core of that situation. This is why it would be a mistake, as we will see in a moment, to confuse restricted action with a partial, limited, or sectoral claim.

What is at stake here is not the dialectic of reformism and revolution: the global and totalitarian vision of society belongs not only to the modern conceptions of revolution, but also to reformism. Let's take first a classical example: that of the working class. As its name indicates, this class is a part or subset of a situation: the capitalist system of production. As such, this class can make a partial or self-interested claim. Take for example a claim raised by a union. Such a claim is perfectly "negotiable" within the framework of the situation, and, from the moment the class becomes unionized, it can even obtain a favorable decision from the ordinary justice system. But, as Marxists used to reproach trade unionists, any action in that sense --even a violent one-- can be social, but it's not political if it does not question the structure of the situation. In this case, justice does not reside in the provision of higher or lower wages to workers, but in the destruction of the system that alienates their labor time.

For the same reason, this latter position is not "negotiable," or cannot be answered from the normality of the situation, because it implies its destruction. In this way, political action ceases to be a partial claim, so as to become a singularity: something unforeseeable by the situation because it questions its very foundations. At this point it's no longer a matter of a class, but of an unclassifiable or anomalous political subject. This subject does not exist outside the situation. It's a subject that arises from, but is not linked to, the situation because the situation does not foresee it. At the same time, this singularity is universal from the very moment it introduces a rupture that concerns all the inhabitants of the situation (bourgeois, petit-bourgeois, intellectuals, artists, proletarians, etc.), who now have to decide whether or not to commit to the struggle that questions not only the situation they inhabit, but also what they in themselves are. This is why the commitment to a struggle is a completely different thing from external or humanist solidarity. Let's take a second example: the black population of the United States. As a subset or part of a situation, black people have struggled for the right to be recognized as equal to white people. Not only as far as the right to vote is concerned, but also with regard to their functions: a black person should not be discriminated as a candidate for a job, since he is "as capable as a white person" to do it. Which means that he fulfils all the conditions required by the system. This is the reason why the first step towards liberation from slavery was to adopt, in the last century, the religion of white people: being a Christian was the equivalent of being "human" – being like white people, of course, from the standpoint of the white vision of the world. In the twentieth century, the equivalent was integration: assimilation into the system and way of life of white people in order to conquer the same rights. Many white people could, in this way, give lessons of tolerance to their racist fellow compatriots: "blacks are not evil by nature, there are some who are good: those who live like us whites, who are good Americans." As a reward, they were even sent to Vietnam to show that between Americans there was no racial distinction.

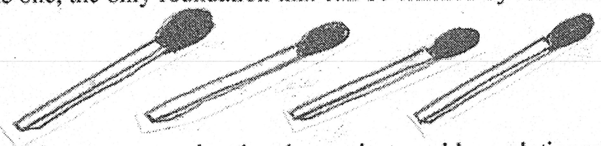
But at the same time, some radical groups of blacks began to criticize the "world of the whites." Several malicious intellectuals --of all skin colors-- interpreted this as inverted racism: scorn toward the "white man" and celebration of Negritude (black is beautiful). But the "white man" is not this or that member of the "white race." This is not about racist arguments, but about "white man" as a model of behavior or mode of being: an identifying image to which both whites and blacks can be assimilated. Yet the point is that a black minority revealed --as feminism did in turn-- that "white man" is a norm of behavior and a worldview that is imposed to all the inhabitants of a situation. In this way, whoever takes a commitment to the black cause does so not as simple external or humanist solidarity, but as a true commitment that implies questioning a situation in which he or she is also implicated. This struggle is, therefore, concrete and universal for the same reason that it is not negotiable through any available administrative or legal mechanism.



6. The political subject

Hence, we can define the subject of restricted action as a 'minority'. But it's necessary to dispel two possible misunderstandings that can arise from this concept. Firstly, the concept of minority does not refer to the quantitative. Thus, women are a 'minority' that, quantitatively speaking, is the majority. Secondly, the term 'minority' has been used by postmodernists to speak of a 'right to difference', which is nothing but the recognition 'by right' of a reality 'of fact', namely cultural diversity. But of course, the moment they invoke such a right, these ideologists can only recognise but the smallest, amusingly exotic differences. When it comes to differences that are highly accentuated, such as the practice of genital mutilation or the tyrannical assassinations carried out in certain Third World regimes, this right to difference collapses. Can one speak of the Rwandan massacre as a simple cultural phenomenon? As we understand it, 'minority' is a group that is confronted by a majority-held image or by the norm of a situation. For this reason, it's not a matter of making partial or sectoral claims that would in any case invoke, at the most, the application of human rights.

The struggle of the minority is universal in that it attacks a dominant common sense, a situational normality that concerns all the inhabitants of the situation. In this respect, the struggle of the minority is not, as we were saying, 'negotiable', it cannot find a solution from the point of view of the management of the situation. Thus, the point is not to be in solidarity with a minority or to intervene wherever it manifests itself, but to have the courage to become a minority or to betray what the majority, as a norm, expects from us. To become a minority is to become unpredictable: to create a political subject who is displaced *vis-à-vis* all the possibilities that a situation proposes. This free act is the only legitimate one, the only foundation that can be claimed by restricted political action.



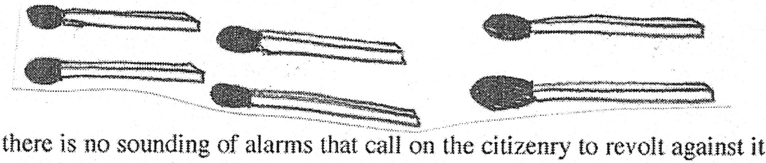
7. The serious and the tragic

By founding the struggle upon a future to come, upon a better, more rational and more just world, revolutionary modernity functioned on an 'epic' model in which the progressive forces of liberation would overcome the reactionary armies of oppression and barbarism. The final victory was the establishment of a free, just and rational world. In turn, 'managerial politics' --the dominant politics of today-- function solely upon the concept of 'serious' matters. Serious matters are approached as fixable in the short or long term, from within the normality of the situation, regardless of how illusory such a notion might be. In the face of serious matters, there is no victory but rather a 'cure'. All struggles that claim a 'negotiable' partiality fall from the start into this trap of the administrative, managerial or legal logic of serious matters. This is why it's important not to confuse the spectacular dimension or the violence of an action with its political 'radicality.' Clandestine activity is not enough to transform a group into a political subject and effectively become a minority.

And so we find that restricted action recuperates a 'tragic' dimension of the political subject: it operates upon the only point that is non-negotiable in terms of management; in other words, it operates upon an unpredictable possible --or the 'impossible' from the viewpoint of the normality of the status quo. It operates precisely upon the basis of this normality, upon the point of being of the situation, that which makes its existence possible. We say that such point of being is inconsistent because it cannot be taken into consideration by the statements that give any situation its apparent veracity and meaning. In this way, inconsistency is absurd; it is a non-meaning necessarily foreclosed by the consistency of the situation.

For this reason, from the perspective of a common sense or consensus, this truth is unintelligible: it is not a fact that can be demonstrated but a reality that must be forced through. Thus in Europe of the nineteenth century, for example, the fact that industrial capitalism generated terrible social inequalities was an observation that anybody could corroborate. It was a 'serious matter', a preoccupation detectable in all studies of that society as well as in the novels of Dickens and Zola. But viewed in such terms, it could only invoke a humanist principle of private or state assistance. This assistance, not surprisingly, corresponded exactly to the logic of the system: the state or the charitable organisations took care of maintaining alive and in good health, during the months of low production, an enormous amount of labour power that could then be used whenever it was once again desirable. Within the logic of the system, this misery could be inhuman but it was not essentially unjust. The buying and selling of labour power took place according to the laws of the free market. That is what Marx says in response to Proudhon: capitalist exploitation is not theft because it fits perfectly within the canons of the established legality of bourgeois democracy. The capitalist and the worker 'freely' exchange money for labour. However, it's precisely here that Marx introduces the idea of 'forcing' *[forçage]*: work cannot be bought or sold as a commodity because it is what produces all commodities. For this reason, this structural injustice does not reflect a failure or a partial dysfunction of capitalism: on the one hand it is perfectly consistent and it leaves no room for reproach; on the other hand, this injustice is what establishes or makes capitalism possible, it is its point of inconsistency, necessarily invisible to capitalism itself.

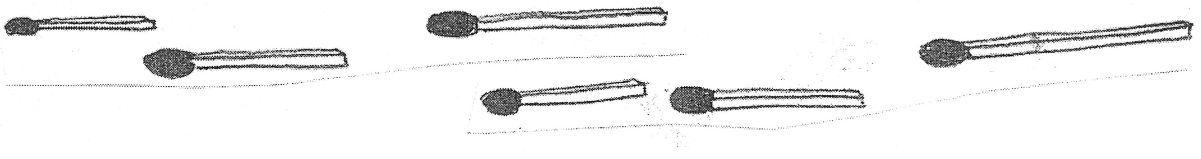
Thus the free, just and rational rules of the market, the laws of supply and demand, have their origin in an injustice, an alienation and an absurdity that are unintelligible to the system, and which are, consequently, perfectly legal and consensual even in the eyes of a large number of workers and trade unionists. This is why the point is not so much that injustice sparks up rebellion, but rather that rebellion forces the inconsistency of the system: it's in light of the revolutionary political project that the system reveals itself as unjust. When the militants of the black minority come to say that a Black man can be a White man and a White man is not necessarily White --he can become black, or part of a minority-- they force a situation not only at a point which cannot be grasped and is absurd from the perspective of the logic of that same situation, but also at the level of the foundation that explains both discrimination ('they're not like us', say certain Whites) and assimilation ('we are like them', reply certain Blacks).



8. The ethics of the individual

From this perspective, in a situation, there is no sounding of alarms that call on the citizenry to revolt against it: every individual is a being in situation, and despite themself, is possessed by its presuppositions. In this respect, s/he plays as a destiny the roles presented to them by the situation. The spectator-individual thus remains impotent in front of the 'world', since they can only ask themself the questions that can be answered by the common sense of their situation. The indignation or horror that they may feel when confronted with a fact --that of poverty, for example, or discrimination-- do not generate political action. The individual is always faced with 'serious' circumstances that lead them to appeal to the knowledge of the administration or the intervention of the judge. The individual asks themself how something could have happened, but never why. The question of why leads to the point of being of the situation, to its foundation or its condition of existence, to the blind spot or the nucleus that is obscured and inaccessible to them. It's not a coincidence, then, that post-modern ideology, in defending the consensus and the existent legality as the framework of all politics, privileges the figure of the individual. In the face of the old mass politics, the individual is seen as a nucleus of rationality and lucidity.

From Le Bon to Freud and beyond, the man of the masses was conceived as someone who, like a hypnotized person or a zombie, nullifies his reflexive individuality in order to obey the orders of the Party, the Führer or the church, and thus finds himself capable of committing the worst types of barbarism. But why should it be assumed that individuals cease to be individuals when they come together? Why should it be assumed that a person thinks when they are alone but not when they are in a group? It's believed that if a multitude acts together in a uniform way, it's because each individual has abandoned 'their' will, 'their' own choice, in order to submit themself to the decision of an Other. Often this Other is characterized by an impersonal 'One' to



which the individual delegates their reflection and volition. But in fact it's the other way around: the individual as an autonomous entity, meaning someone who determines their own rules of behavior, is an illusion. There is nothing left but a 'one says', 'one sees', 'one does': when the individual talks, their voice emits discourses written elsewhere; if their eyes can see, it's always someone else's sight; if they acts, it's because they are interpreting a role that has been assigned to them. The individual constitutes themself as such, on the basis of their identification with a dominant model. Therefore, in contrast to what many authors have thought, there is no such thing as a non-alienated, authentic individual, free beyond the social masquerade. There is no critical nucleus in the individual. On the contrary: by seeing themself as an autonomous and indivisible unity, they negates the fact that they are a being in a situation, that they are constituted of languages, values, beliefs or myths that they have neither created nor does he dominate.

If we can think of the situation as a theatre play, the individual in it always plays a role. Hence the illusion of invisibility, of continuity in time emerges: they are always the same because in the same situation they repeat the same role. But in fact, being always in situation, they are someone else every time there is a change in the situation: a discontinuity in time. When the ideologues of postmodernity privilege individuality, they do so based on a right to mobility, a right to the conservation of religious or political beliefs, a right to read and write what we like, to live as we will, etc. In this way they think they are responding to all kinds of fundamentalisms, when in fact they are only recuperating the old liberal rights. But these are only *formal* rights: they do not contemplate the essential integration of the individual, their destiny, since in order to constitute themself as individuality, they must interpret a pre-established role. The individual does not exist outside the situation that constitutes them, and they cannot claim any freedom if they do not transform, if they do not question, this situation. Hence, there is no freedom of thought that is not linked to a practice of transformation of the status quo, and there is no radical action that does not return to the point of inconsistency of the situation. To privilege the struggle for free thought by itself, as if human freedom were located there, is an individualist illusion of the 'beautiful souls'.

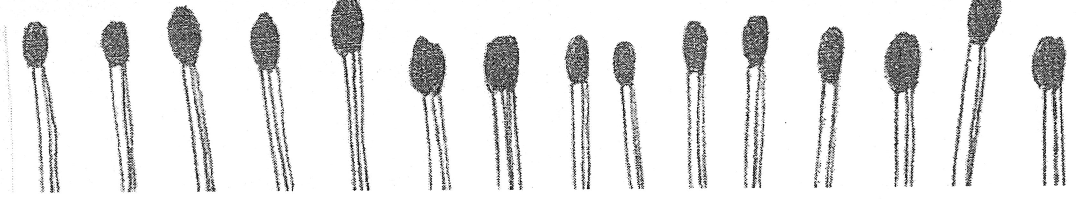
Far from endangering the rights acquired through historical struggles, this critique of the individual allows us to think in terms of civic rights. If individuals can act and think without restrictions, it's thanks to the conquest of these civic rights. These were the invention of a revolutionary project that responded to a historically determined conception of man; it was not, however, the unveiling of the 'free' nature of the individual.

9. A non-state politics

When we speak of the subject, one must not confound this concept with the idea of a "subjectivity" understood as the nucleus of individual or collective experiences, even though an individual or a collective may constitute itself, eventually, as a political subject (and also an artistic, scientific, or loving subject, as conceived by the philosopher Alain Badiou). Indeed, an individual or a collective constitutes itself as subject when it enters into a relation, through thought or practice, with a truth of the situation, the point of nonconsistency upon which it is founded, that point of being that is the condition of its possibility.

Let us repeat it: it's because this subject's action cannot be anticipated by the situation, or it cannot be "negotiated" in conformity with its legality, that he or she incarnates a free act. In this way, with the idea of restricted action, we are attempting to define a politics that cannot be confounded simply with State management. Indeed, the classic definition of politics --the one we find in any dictionary-- identifies the concept with the "art of governing the republic", meaning the ability, the knowledge or the technique to manage public affairs or problems. For this reason, the idea of politics remained inescapably linked to the idea of the State. However, one must not confound the State with a simple institution or organization. In a larger definition, we should think of "state" as the normal state of any situation. From this perspective, any "negotiable" action, any corporate or partial social claim that proves to be manageable or solvable within an established legality, is part of this static definition of politics, even if the action involves the use of illegal measures to obtain what is demanded. This is why the great challenge today is to think politics in a way that removes the issue of power from the central position it currently occupies.

Today, the State as a site of effective power which should, by force or vote, be occupied by a politically revolutionary party becomes a formidable illusion, simply because the point upon which a situation is founded and given legitimacy is not something that depends on the State. The latter only over-codifies a reality for which it is more an effect than the cause. To some extent, this is something that was known to Marxists, yet they thought that a change in legislation and in the ideological apparatus of the State would favour the revolutionary transformation of society. (Towards the end of his life, however, Lenin became aware of the error: "We have



painted the tsarist State in red".) Thus, in soviet Russia and in other States, a series of deployments of bourgeois State power were not only painted in red but were also brought to the highest level of barbarism: the medicalization of subjectivity, media alienation, normalization, racial discrimination and worker despoliation. It sufficed to add the adjective "revolutionary" to this barbarism for the victims to accept it in the name of the future good. Even when many of these old revolutionaries speak today of their projects for a society of the future, we can clearly see to what extent they continue to be prisoners of the assumptions that underlie present situations. In their projects, there is also a state-based, managerial conception of politics (they want to be ready in case they attain power). It goes back to good order, rational society, just distribution, and truly free relations between human beings. It goes back to good barbarism against the bad one, the paradoxical idea of a liberating master and the imperative of a world "the way it should be."

We could say that restricted political action and the philosophy of the situation make an appeal to a liberating humility: we can only speak, and this is already quite difficult, of the situation in which we live. Yet it's not only a matter of humility, it's also a critical position: any knowledge regarding an ulterior situation that it would be necessary to attain cannot be but a vain speculation, given that there is no knowledge capable of shedding the assumptions of the situation in which it is born. Which is why the philosophy of revolt does not aspire to any knowledge at all. Rather, it aspires to a truth, a relation with the being of the situation, this hole, this opacity hidden within established knowledge, because the situation, far from rendering action provincial, leads us to the thought of a concrete universal.

10. Conclusion

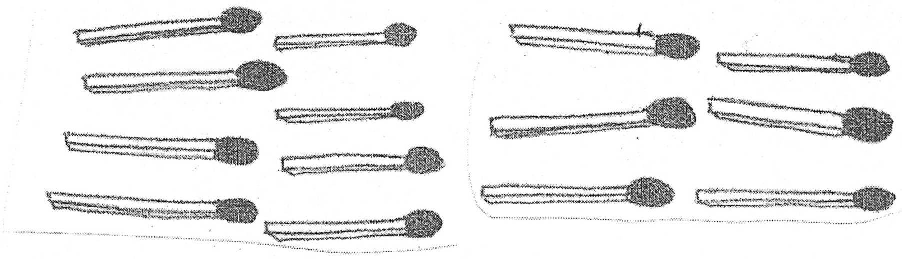
The challenge of our time is to think of and invent a new liberating praxis. A praxis that implies the formation of a myriad of concrete minority organisations and experiences, not as a means of achieving majority status at some point in the future, but as a way to invent and create a life and a politics based on freedom. To renounce majority status is not the standard of failure or impotence. By representing dominant images and structures, the majority is the most impotent from the point of view of freedom. It's necessary to understand that power-over [*pouvoir*] and power-to-do [*puissance*] are two mutually exclusive realities: nobody is more impotent than a master filled with the power to change life. Conceived and structured in terms of taking State power --either through violence or by means of elections-- the party ends up being, today, the very image of this impotence. Notably, this is due to the assumption that sustains the party, which is, as we have seen, that power is what founds a situation, and that it must be located in the State.

Under the pretext of unifying the multiplicity of minority struggles into a global strategy - -whether it is at the national or the world scale-- the party is an organization that separates minorities from their situations in order to transform them into an "alternative" majority.

Therefore, together with messianic time, what must be questioned is the party, the master liberator *par excellence*. As any militant has encountered as part of their everyday practice, all the work and the concrete experience gathered by the grassroots organisations, themselves built equally out of failures and mistakes, are crossed out by the "abstract" slogans of the party. And this is simply because, for the party, the global strategy and the occupation of power become priorities over concrete and restricted actions, always with the illusion that, once power is taken over, things will, in their totality, change. However, there cannot be a solution of continuity between (minority) politics --i.e., power-to-do-- and (majority) management --i.e., power-over. Even if these are structurally condemned to exist side by side, we must break with the illusion that it's necessary to reach majority status in order to conduct a politics of the minority.

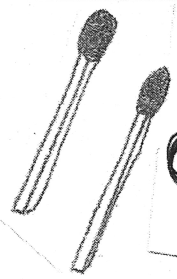
A multiplicity of libertarian groups and collectives --linked in each case to a concrete universal-- is the image of a multiple radical political power [*puissance*]. However, the non-totalisation or non-submission of this multiplicity to the "impotent" power of the Party does not imply that the exchange of experiences between these groups is not desirable or even indispensable. The moment is difficult, the challenge is large, but fidelity to two centuries of revolutionary struggles allows us to preserve the same impulse, the same desire on which these were inspired. Instead of crying over the ruins of the old revolutionary edifice, one must consider that this fragmentation, this dispersion and this non-totality are precisely the necessary conditions for a new revolutionary power to free itself from the totalitarian myth of messianic progressivism.

September 1995

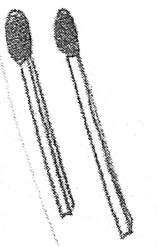


** We would like to thank Miguel Benasayag, facilitator of the Malgré Tout collective, for permission to translate and publish this text, and Fiona Jeffries and Scott Uzelman for editorial assistance.*

According to one of the collective's founders, the philosopher and psychanalyst Miguel Benasayag, Malgré Tout ("in spite of everything") was formed in 1988 with the purpose of creating a decentralised space for the expression and exchange of political ideas and practices. While acknowledging the need to discuss the crisis of modernity, the collective has sought to distance itself on the one hand from the immobilizing sophistry of so many postmodern thinkers, and, on the other, from the deceptive thinking and action of the pragmatist left, which Malgré Tout sees as corroded by a complete devotion to influencing government policy. Some of the collective's practices over the years include work with undocumented migrants in France, with social movements in Argentina, and with social centres in Italy. At the moment of writing the manifesto, the Malgré Tout collective was composed, among others, by Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar, Michael Löwy, and Miguel Benasayag (facilitator).



APEC, climate change and the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership



APEC-the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation- was formed in 1989, at the behest of the Hawke Labor government, as an economic forum to promote free trade in the Asia-Pacific region. Leaders of 21 economies on the Pacific Rim meet yearly, with working groups meeting between the summits. APEC is the only international forum where the leaders of the US, Japan, and Russia meet with leaders from East Asia, the Americas, and Australasia.

APEC reviews various socio-economic problems in the region and argues for market reforms in order to fix them. It calls for the removal of high taxes and regulations and changes to government policy and systems to make it easier for business to recover debt and enforce contracts.

APEC aims to accelerate economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region through neo-liberal theories of development. It calls for the removal of government barriers that halt the incursion of private sector development. This would ideally see the sale of government-owned service providers and the facilitation of foreign investment on customary-owned land.

APEC pushes for multilateral free trade agreements, which act as drivers of unregulated economic growth without social and environmental considerations.

Trade agreements reduce tariffs (import taxes) on goods and reduce other barriers to trade. Trade agreements demand the expansion for energy, since they expand trade and production of goods, especially goods for export. They also facilitate long-term contracts for energy fuels, and separate agreements like those required for uranium exports. Despite efforts to expand APEC's scope to areas like the "war on terror" influential ministers like Alexander Downer still describe the promotion and propogation of "free trade" as the summit's prime focus.

APEC's agenda

In 1991 APEC adopted the following agenda;

- To sustain regional growth and development and contribute to global growth and development;
- To enhance the positive gains of economic interdependence by encouraging the flow of goods, services, capital and technology;
- To develop and strengthen the multilateral trading system and
- To reduce barriers to trade in goods and services and investment among participants

In 1994 APEC adopted the 'Bogor goals', the more specific objectives of zero trade and investment barriers in the Asia-Pacific region for industrialised countries by 2010 and for developing countries by 2020.

APEC has been influential in shaping policies of its member governments, especially on energy, as illustrated by the influence of the APEC energy working group.

The APEC energy working group and energy business network

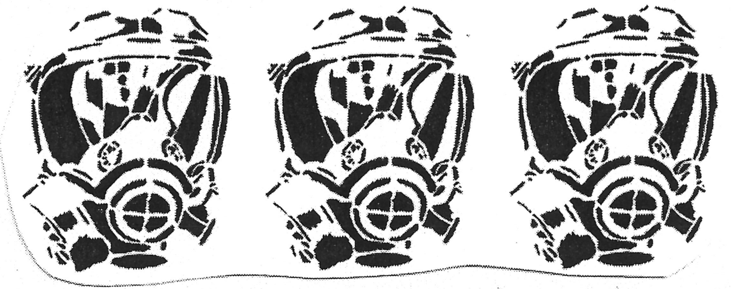
Launched in 1990, the energy-working group aims to maximise the energy sectors' contribution to the regions economic and social wellbeing, while maintaining the environmental impacts of energy supply and use. The working group meets twice a year and is made up of government officials from energy policy departments.

Research is provided by an APEC centre that has groups researching around
- 'Clean' fossil energy
- Energy efficiency
- Energy Exploration and Development
- Renewable energy technologies

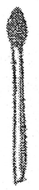
The working group welcomes contributions from the private sector and has established a business energy network that makes substantial inputs to the meetings. The business energy network meets immediately before the energy working group and directly influences the agenda.

Members of the business energy network include Rio Tinto Australia, BHP Billiton, US Chevron Oil Company and Woodside Energy Limited.

The APEC member countries group as a whole consumes more energy than it produces and accounts for more than one half of the world's energy demands.



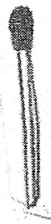
Energy Working Group and the Kyoto Protocol



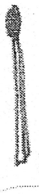
The energy working group has largely rejected the Kyoto Protocol strategy and has focused on solutions involving fossil fuels and nuclear power, rather than energy conservation and renewable energy sources.

Proposals from the ministerial meeting included promoting energy efficiency and conservation, promoting cross-border energy trade, attracting energy investment and accelerating energy technology development.

APEC focuses on the development of strategies to address 'energy security'. Energy security describes ensuring that certain APEC economies hold a monopoly on oil, coal, natural gas and uranium deposits in the Asia-Pacific region as result of the global diminishing of non-renewable, finite energy resources.

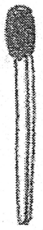


Research papers developed for the working group include "the role of nuclear power in the energy development of the APEC region" and "the Kyoto protocol and the APEC economies". The later was co-authored by the director of the Australian APEC studies centre and is employed by ITS Global and the industrial lobby group AUSTA to lobby for Australia-US Free Trade Agreement and is a high-profile critic of the Kyoto protocol.



The authors argue for that the reduction of fossil fuel consumption will result in lower economic growth in developing countries and lower living standards, and should be rejected as a strategy. The authors propose the reduction of the generation of carbon dioxide be through the application of the latest fossil fuel combustion technology in power generation rather than capping the emission of greenhouse gases.

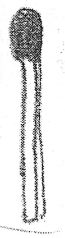
APEC argues that the Kyoto Protocol strategy is unlikely to meet its professed goals of transferring technology to developing countries to assist them to manage climate change. APEC argues that the focus should be on greater efficiency in the combustion of fossil fuels and the development of nuclear energy rather than the development of renewable energies such as wind and solar power.



John Howard declared that "the idea that we can address climate change matters successfully at the expense of economic growth is not only unrealistic but is also unacceptable".

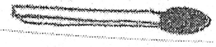
APEC and the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership

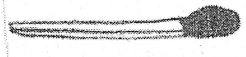
Leaked plans have shown that the Australian Government wants to use the APEC as the forum to announce Australia's entry into the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership.

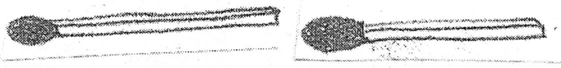


The US-initiated Partnership is aimed at "Accelerating Clean and Safe Nuclear Energy", by seeking the control of the distribution, reprocessing and storage of nuclear fuel around the world. It proclaims itself as an attempt to obtain U.S energy security, to encourage clean development around the world, to reduce the risk of nuclear proliferation and to aid the environment.

In practice, this means the expansion of the deadly nuclear industry and the US shaping - and driving - weapons proliferation throughout the world. The connection between increased numbers of nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons is clear-from Israel, to India, to Pakistan, the creation of nuclear plants has lead to the establishment of arsenals of nukes.





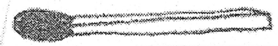


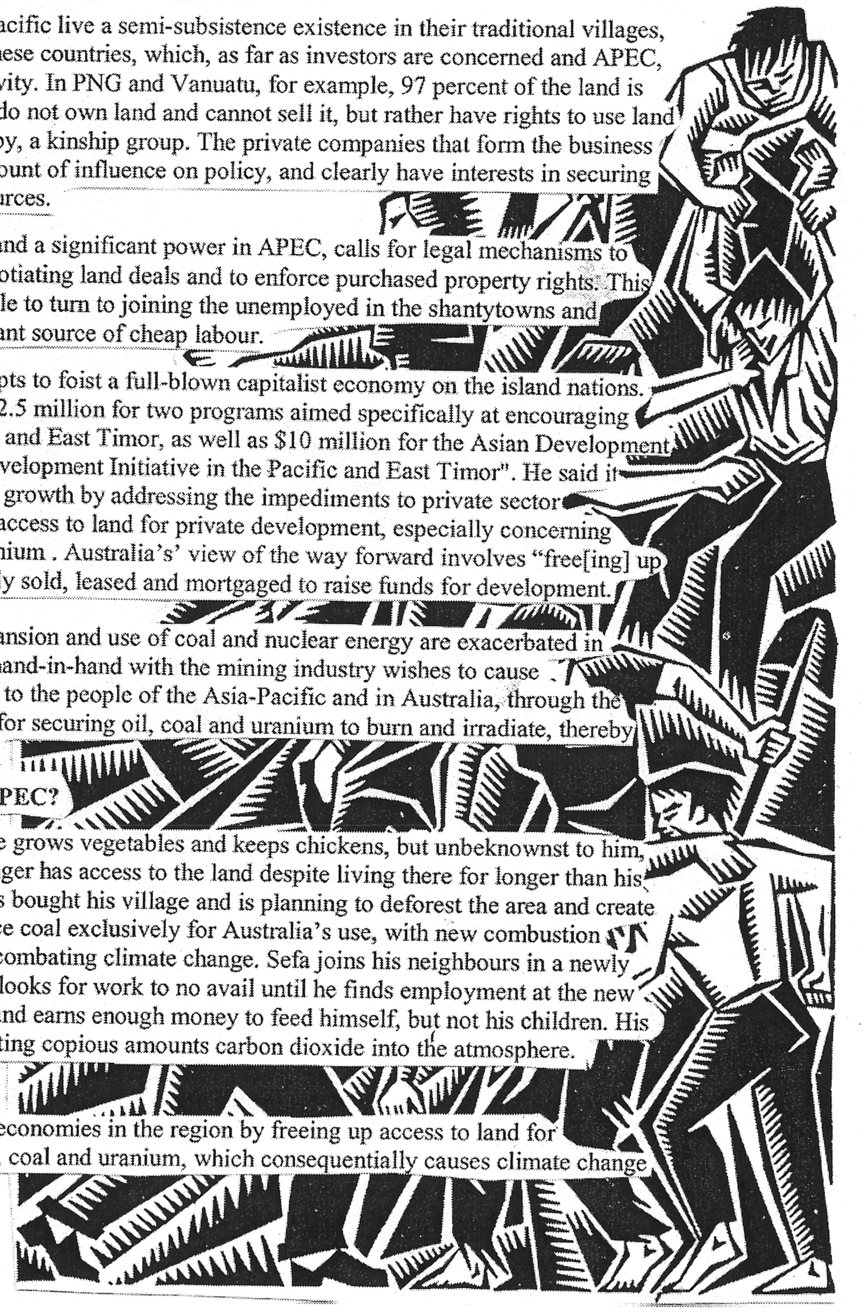
Under the GNEP proliferation would supposedly be limited by reprocessing nuclear fuel in a way that renders the plutonium useless for developing nuclear weapons. Yet this technology is yet to be developed, and when reprocessing technology has been used in the past-notably in the West Valley plant in the U.S from 1966-1972-it has been a catastrophic failure. Robert Alvarez, a former official at the U.S Department of Energy comments aptly on the financial implausibility of the plan-needing billions more dollars to even get off the ground. Nuclear is of course too slow, too expensive and too dangerous to seriously assist in the struggle against climate change-making the claim that the plan will 'aid the environment' implausible.

A more likely explanation for the plan than the stated rationale is a combination of corporate profiteering and internal U.S realpolitic. Corporate profiteering as there is thought to be a "nuclear renaissance" underway-as industry insiders point out repeatedly-and the increased chances of new plants gives companies a chance to cash in. U.S realpolitic as the American Yucca Mountain storage facility is increasingly ineffective, and the GNEP gives the U.S the opportunity to dump the excess on someone else.

Howard entering Australia into the GNEP would herald a substantial expansion of Australia's role in the global nuclear industry. Australia's status in the GNEP as a major nuclear fuel supplier would also significantly increase pressure on Australia to accept radioactive waste from other countries. The Federal government's current intervention into the Northern Territory, including proposing a nuclear waste dump on Aboriginal land at Muckaty Station, may include turning the Territory into a global radioactive dumping ground. Despite the government's claims to the contrary, the Federal Council of the Liberal Party passed a motion in June explicitly supporting an international waste dump in Australia. Late last year, measures to allow the importation of radioactive waste into Australia were quietly passed through parliament.

Impacts on the Asia-Pacific region and Australia





A vast majority of people in the Asia-Pacific live a semi-subsistence existence in their traditional villages, acknowledged by the constitutions of these countries, which, as far as investors are concerned and APEC, is an intolerable barrier to business activity. In PNG and Vanuatu, for example, 97 percent of the land is held under customary title. Individuals do not own land and cannot sell it, but rather have rights to use land because of their birth into, or adoption by, a kinship group. The private companies that form the business working group of APEC has a large amount of influence on policy, and clearly have interests in securing land for the exploitation of natural resources.

The Australian government in line with and a significant power in APEC, calls for legal mechanisms to ensure the rights of businesses when negotiating land deals and to enforce purchased property rights. This will inevitably lead to forcing more people to turn to joining the unemployed in the shantytowns and provide private enterprise with an abundant source of cheap labour.

Australia is not backing away as it attempts to foist a full-blown capitalist economy on the island nations. Downer announced the allocation of "$22.5 million for two programs aimed specifically at encouraging private sector development in the Pacific and East Timor, as well as $10 million for the Asian Development Bank's proposal for a "Private Sector Development Initiative in the Pacific and East Timor". He said it "will promote enterprise, investment and growth by addressing the impediments to private sector development", these impediments being access to land for private development, especially concerning securing energy such as oil, coal and uranium . Australia's' view of the way forward involves "free[ing] up customary lands, so that land can be freely sold, leased and mortgaged to raise funds for development.

Meanwhile, the justification for the expansion and use of coal and nuclear energy are exacerbated in Australia. The Australian government, hand-in-hand with the mining industry wishes to cause unimaginable devastating consequences to the people of the Asia-Pacific and in Australia, through the dispossession of people from their land for securing oil, coal and uranium to burn and irradiate, thereby causing climate change and toxic waste.

Why should climate activists Protest APEC?

Sefa lives a semi-subsistence existence; he grows vegetables and keeps chickens, but unbeknownst to him, government legislation changes, he no longer has access to the land despite living there for longer than his grandparents can remember. Rio Tinto has bought his village and is planning to deforest the area and create a coal mine in it's' place. This will produce coal exclusively for Australia's use, with new combustion technologies used as a farcical policy for combating climate change. Sefa joins his neighbours in a newly created shantytown closer to the city. He looks for work to no avail until he finds employment at the new coal mine where he works a 10-hour day and earns enough money to feed himself, but not his children. His country now exports 20% more coal, emitting copious amounts carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

APEC's policies aim at 'developing' the economies in the region by freeing up access to land for privatisation and securing oil, natural gas, coal and uranium, which consequentially causes climate change and environmental destruction.

Insurrectionary Anarchy: Organizing for Attack!

(from Do or Die! #10, 2003)

"From a certainpoint onward, there is no turning back. That is the point that must be reached."
- Franz Kafka

For us anarchists the questions of how to act and how to organize are intimately linked. And it is these two questions, not the question of the desired form of a future society, which provide us with the most useful method for understanding the various forms of anarchism that exist.

Insurrectionary anarchism is one such form, although it is important to stress that insurrectionary anarchists don't form one unified block, but are extremely varied in their perspectives. Insurrectionary anarchism is not an ideological solution to social problems, nor a commodity on the capitalist market of ideologies and opinions. Rather it is an on-going practice aimed at putting an end to the domination of the state and the continuance of capitalism, which requires analysis and discussion to advance. Historically, most anarchists, exceptthose who believed that society would evolve to the point that it would leave the state behind, have believed that some sort of insurrectionary activity would be necessary to radically transform society. Most simply, this means that the state has to be knocked out of existence by the exploited and excluded, thus anarchists must attack: waiting for the state to disappear is defeat.

Here we spell out some implications that we and some other insurrectionary anarchists have drawn from this general problem: if the state will not disappear on its own, how then do we end its existence? Insurrectionary anarchism is primarily a practice, and focuses on the organization of attack. Thus, the adjective 'insurrectionary' does not indicate a specific model of the future. Anarchists who believe we must go through an insurrectionary period to rid the world of the institutions of domination and exploitation, moreover, take a variety of positions on the shape of a future society - they could be anarcho-communist, individualist or primitivist, for example. Many refuse to offer a specific, singular model of the future at all, believing that people will choose a variety of social forms to organize themselves when given the chance. They are critical of groups or tendencies that believe they are 'carriers of the truth' and try to impose their ideological and formal solution to the problem of social organization. Instead, many insurrectionary anarchists believe that it is through self-organization in struggle that people will learn to live without institutions of domination.
There is also another, more specific usage of the term 'insurrection' - one that comes from the distinction Max Stirner, a 19th century German philosopher and individualist, drew between insurrection and revolution.[1] To Stirner, revolution implied a transition between two systems, whereas insurrection is an uprising that begins from an individual's discontent with their own life and through it the individual does not seek to build a new system but to create the relations they desire. Both of these general conceptions of insurrection have informed insurrectionary anarchism.

In this article we will first explore some of the general implications of these two conceptions of insurrection. Then, as these ideas have grown out of the practice of struggle and from concrete experiences, we will explain these ideas further by putting them within the historical context of their development. While insurrectionary anarchists are active in many parts of the world at the moment, we are particularly influenced by the activities and writings of those in Italy and Greece, which are also the countries where insurrectionary anarchists are the most active. The current, extremely varied Italian insurrectionary anarchist scene, which centers around a number of occupied spaces and publications, exists as an informal network carrying on their struggle outside of all formal organizations. This tendency has taken on the 'insurrectionary anarchist' label to distinguish itself from the Italian Anarchist Federation; a platformist organization which officially reject individual acts of revolt, favoring only mass action and an educational and evangelistic practice centering around propaganda in 'non-revolutionary periods' - and from the Italian libertarian municipalists[2] who take a largely reformist approach to 'anarchist' activity.

The state will not wither away, as it seems many anarchists have come to believe - some are entrenched in a position of waiting, while others even openly condemn the acts of those for whom the creation of the new world depends on the destruction of the old. Attack is the refusal of mediation, pacification, sacrifice, accommodation and compromise in struggle. It is through acting and learning to act, not propaganda, that we will open the path to insurrection - although obviously analysis and discussion have a role in clarifying how to act. Waiting only teaches waiting; in acting one learns to act. Yet it is important to note that the force of an insurrection is social, not military. The measure for evaluating the importance of a generalized revolt is not the armed clash, but, on the contrary, the extent of the paralysis of the economy, of normality. If students continue to study, workers and office employees to work, the unemployed to solely strive for employment, then no change is possible. We could look to the examples of May 1968 in Paris, Italy in the 1970s, or the more recent insurrection in Albania for inspiration.[3]

Sabotage and Other 'Modest Attempts'

As anarchists, the revolution is our constant point of reference; no matter what we are doing or with what problem we are concerned. But the revolution is not a myth simply to be used as a point of reference, it should not be thought of as inhabiting an abstract future. Precisely because it is a concrete event, it must be built daily through more modest attempts that do not have all the liberating characteristics of the social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them the uprising of the most exploited and excluded of society and the most politically aware minority opens the way to the possible involvement of increasingly wider sections of the exploited in a flux of rebellion, which could lead to revolution. Over the last year, we have seen the beginning of this process at work in Argentina. Yet struggles must be developed both in the intermediate and long term. In other words, it is still possible and necessary to intervene in intermediate struggles, that is, in struggles that are circumscribed, even locally, with precise objectives that are born from some specific problem. This may be direct action to resist the building of military bases or prisons; fights against the institution of property, such as squatting and rent strikes; or attacks on particular capitalist projects, such as high-speed railways, genetically modified crops or power transmission lines. These should not be considered to be of secondary importance; such kinds of struggles also disturb capitalism's universal project.

For these events to build they must spread; insurrectionary anarchism, therefore, places particular importance on the circulation and spread of action, not managed revolt, for no army or police force is able to control the generalized circulation of such autonomous activity. Paying attention to how struggles have spread has led many anarchists to aim their critical focus on the question of organization, for whereas centralized struggle is controlled and limited (one only needs to think of the examples of the many revolutionary movements in Latin America that until recently were controlled by 'The Party' to understand this), autonomous struggle has the capacity to spread capillary-style.

Therefore, what the system is afraid of is not just these acts of sabotage themselves, but also them spreading socially. Uncontrollability itself is the strength of the insurrection. Every proletarianized individual who disposes of even the most modest means can draw up his or her objectives, alone or along with others. It is materially impossible for the state and capital to police the whole social terrain. Anyone who really wants to contest the network of control can make their own theoretical and practical contribution as they see fit. There is no need to fit themselves within the structured roles of formally organized revolt (revolt that is circumscribed and controlled by an organization). The appearance of the first broken links of social control coincides with the spreading of acts of sabotage. The anonymous practice of social self-liberation could spread to all fields, breaking the codes of prevention put into place by power.

In moments when larger scale insurrections are not taking place, small actions - which require unsophisticated means that are available to all and thus are easily reproducible - are by their very simplicity and spontaneity uncontrollable. They make a mockery of even the most advanced technological developments in counter-insurgency. In the United States, a string of arsons of environmentally damaging projects, some claimed under the name Earth Liberation Front, have spread across the country due largely to the simplicity of the technique. In Italy, sabotage of high-speed railways has spread uncontrollably, again because anyone can plan and carry out their own action without needing a large organization with charters and constitutions, complex techniques or sophisticated knowledge.

In addition, contrary to the mathematicians of the grand revolutionary parties, it is never possible to see the outcome of a specific struggle in advance. Even a limited struggle can have the most unexpected consequences. The passage from the various insurrections - limited and circumscribed - to revolution can never be guaranteed in advance by any method, nor can one know in advance that present actions will not lead to a future insurrectionary moment.

Roots of Insurrectionary Anarchy

As insurrectionary anarchism is a developing practice - not an ideological model of the future or a determinist history - insurrectionary anarchists do not take the work of any single revolutionary theoretician as their central doctrine: thus insurrectionary anarchists are not Bakuninists, for example, and feel no need to defend all his writings and actions. Yet Bakunin was historically important to the development of an anarchism that focused its force in insurrection. Unlike Marx, who built his support in the First International, mostly within the central executive structure, Bakunin worked to build support for coordinated action though autonomous insurrections at the base, especially in Southern Europe. And since Bakunin's time insurrectionary anarchists have been concentrated in Southern Europe.

In the responses to the Paris Commune of 1871 and in the conflicts of the First International one can see the formation of insurrectionary anarchism's basic concepts. Whereas Marx believed that the new political forms of the Commune (forms of democracy and representation) would advance the social revolution, Bakunin argued that political and organizational forms had held the social revolution back. Also influential to later insurrectionaries, Bakunin argued that it was one's actions that would spread the revolution, not words. In 1871 Marx and his supporters allied themselves with the followers of

Blanqui - from whom the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" came - to cut Bakunin and his supporters out of a special conference of the International held in London. Bakuninists held their own conference in Sonvilier, arguing that hierarchical and political means could never be used to gain social revolutionary ends. As the Sonvilier circular states, it was impossible "for a free and egalitarian society to come out of an authoritarian organization." Marx pejoratively termed the Sonvilier conference "anarchist," and those in Sonvilier called the London conference "Marxist" to mark its authoritarian attempt to control the International. In 1872, Marx succeeded in expelling Bakunin from the International and requiring all member organizations to advocate the conquest of political power as the necessary prerequisite to revolution.

Social and Individual Struggle

Another issue that has caused a lot of debate within anarchist circles is the supposed contradiction between individual and social struggle: again, this is a question of the organization of struggle. This is a debate that has gone on and still goes on within the insurrectionary anarchist circles; Renzo Novatore stood for individual revolt, Errico Malatesta for social struggle, whilst Luigi Galleani believed there was no contradiction between the two.

Novatore, an Italian anarchist who died in a shoot-out with the police in 1922, wrote, "Anarchy is not a social form, but a method of individuation. No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of its members."[4] Malatesta, also an Italian and an active insurrectionary his whole life, was an anarcho-communist for whom anarchism was based in the organized attack of collective struggle, especially of the labor movement; yet, he was still very critical of any form of organization that could become authoritarian. This was the basis of his 1927 disagreement with the Russian Platformists - who attempted to create a centralized and unitary revolutionary organization.

Malatesta critiqued the proposal of the Platformists - who put forward their program in response to the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia - for attempting to discipline and synthesize struggle within a single organization. In his critique of the proposal he stated, "in order to achieve their ends, anarchist organizations must in their constitution and operation, remain in harmony with the principles of anarchism; that is, they must know how to blend the free action of individuals with the necessity and the joy of co-operation which serve to develop the awareness and initiative of their members." While many social anarchists of today critique insurrectionary anarchists by claiming that they are against organization as such, it is worth noting that most social anarchists and anarcho-communists active in the beginning of the last century did not view organization and individualism as a contradiction, and that few anarchists have ever been against organization as such. Maltesta's 1927 statement on the subject bears repeating: "Judging by certain polemics it would seem that there are anarchists who spurn any form of organization; but in fact the many, too many, discussions on this subject, even when obscured by questions of language or poisoned by personal issues, are concerned with the means and not the actual principle of organization. Thus it happens that when those comrades who sound the most hostile to organization want to really do something they organize just like the rest of us and often more effectively. The problem, I repeat, is entirely one of means."[5]

Galleani, who emigrated to the United States in 1901 after facing arrest in Europe edited one of the most important US Italian anarchist journals, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, and was critical of formal organization. In his articles and speeches he merged Kropotkin's idea of mutual aid with unfettered insurgency, defending communist anarchism against authoritarian socialism and reformism, speaking of the value of spontaneity, variety, autonomy and independence, direct action and self-determination. Galleani and his followers were deeply suspicious of formal organizations, seeing them as likely to turn into hierarchical, authoritarian organizations. The critique of formal organization has become a central concern of most insurrectionary anarchists ever since. Galleani saw no contradiction between individual and social struggle, nor did he see a contradiction between communism and anarchism. He was firmly against authoritarian communism, which he saw as growing out of collectivist ideologies - the idea that production and consumption must be organized into a collective in which individuals must participate. Galleani is one of main influences on those who today call themselves insurrectionary anarchists.

Why we are Insurrectionary Anarchists...

- Because we consider it possible to contribute to the development of struggles that are appearing spontaneously everywhere, turning them into mass insurrections - that is to say actual revolutions.
- Because we want to destroy the capitalist order of the world which is useful to nobody but the managers of class domination.
- Because we are for the immediate, destructive attack against the structures, individuals and organizations of capital, state and all forms of oppression.
- Because we constructively criticize all those who are in situations of compromise with power in their belief that the revolutionary struggle is impossible at the present time.
- Because rather than wait, we have decided to proceed to action, even if the time is not ripe.
- Because we want to put an end to this state of affairs right away, rather than wait until conditions make its transformation possible.
- These are some of the reasons why we are anarchists, revolutionaries *and* insurrectionists.

by Alfredo Bonanno.

The debate about the relation between individual and social struggle, between individualism and communism, continues today. Some insurrectionary anarchists argue that insurrection begins with the desire of individuals to break out of constrained and controlled circumstances, the desire to re-appropriate the capacity to create one's own life as one sees fit. This requires that they overcome the separation between themselves and their conditions of existence - food, housing, etc. Where the few, the privileged, control the conditions of existence, it is not possible for most individuals to truly determine their existence on their own terms. Individuality can only flourish where there is equality of access to the conditions of existence. This equality of *access* is communism; what individuals do with that access is up to them and those around them. Therefore, there is no equality or identity of *individuals* implied in true communism. What forces us into an identity or an equality of being are the social roles laid upon us by our present system. Thus there is no contradiction between individuality and communism.

The insurrectional anarchist project grows out of the individual's desire to determine how one will live one's life and with whom one will carry out this project of self-determination. But this desire is confronted on all sides by the existing social order, a reality in which the conditions of our existence and the social relationships through which our lives are created have already been determined in the interests of a ruling class who benefit from the activities that we are compelled to do for our own survival.

Thus the desire for individual self-determination and self-realization leads to the necessity of a class analysis and class struggle. But the old workerist conceptions, which perceived the industrial working class as the central subject of revolution, are not adequate to this task. What defines us as a class is our *dispossession*, the fact that the current system of social relationships steals away our capacity to determine the conditions of our existence. Class struggle exists in all of the individual and collective acts of revolt in which small portions of our daily life are taken back or small portions of the apparatus of domination and exploitation are obstructed, damaged or destroyed. In a significant sense, there are no isolated, individual acts of revolt. All such acts are responses to the social situation, and many involve some level of complicity, indicating some level of collective struggle. Consider, for example, the spontaneous, mostly unspoken organization of the theft of goods and the sabotage of the work process that goes on at most workplaces; this informal co-ordination of subversive activity carried out in the interest of each individual involved is a central principle of collective activity for insurrectionary anarchists, because the collectivity exists to serve the interests and desires of each of the individuals in re-appropriating their lives and often carries within it a conception of ways of relating free of exploitation and domination.

But even lone acts of revolt have their social aspects and are part of the general struggle of the dispossessed. Through a critical attitude towards the struggles of the past, the changes in the forces of domination and their variation between different places, and the development of present struggles, we can make our attack more strategic and targeted. Such a critical attitude is what allows struggles to circulate. Being strategic, however, does not mean there is only one way to struggle; clear strategies are necessary to allow different methods to be used in a coordinated and fruitful way. Individual and social struggle are neither contradictory, nor identical.

Critique of Organization

In Italy, the failure of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s led some to reassess the revolutionary movement and others to abandon it all together. During the '70s, many Leninist groups concluded that capitalism was in the throes of its final crisis, and they moved to armed struggle. These groups acted as professional revolutionaries, reducing their lives to a singular social role. But by the 1980s they came to believe that the time for revolutionary social struggle had ended, and they thus called for an amnesty for movement prisoners from the '70s, some even going as far as to disassociate themselves from the struggle. This separated them from insurrectionary anarchists who believed that a revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism and the state still continued, for no determinist history could name the correct moment to rebel. In fact, determinist history often becomes an excuse for not acting and only pushes a possible rupture with the present further into the impossible.

Much of the Italian insurrectionary anarchist critique of the movements of the '70s focused on the forms of organization that shaped the forces of struggle and out of this a more developed idea of informal organization grew. A critique of the authoritarian organizations of the '70s, whose members often believed they were in a privileged position to struggle as compared to the proletariat as a whole, was further refined in the struggles of the '80s, such as the early 1980s struggle against a military base that was to house nuclear weapons in Comiso, Sicily. Anarchists were very active in that struggle, which was organized into self-managed leagues. These ad hoc, autonomous leagues took three general principles to guide the organization of struggle: permanent conflict, self-management and attack. Permanent conflict meant that the struggle would remain in conflict with the construction of the base until it was defeated without mediating or negotiating. The leagues were self-generated and self-managed; they refused permanent delegation of representatives and the professionalization of struggle. The leagues were organizations of attack on the construction of the base, not the defense of the interests of this or that group. This style of organization allowed groups to take the actions they saw as most effective while still being able to co-ordinate attack when useful, thus keeping open the potential of struggle to spread. It also kept the focus of organization on the goal of ending the construction of the base instead of the building of permanent organizations, for which mediating with state institutions for a share of power usually becomes the focus and limiting the autonomy of struggle the means.

As the anarchists involved in the Comiso struggle understood, one of the central reasons that social struggles are kept from developing in a positive direction is the prevalence of forms of organization that cut us off from our own power to act and close off the potential of insurrection. These are permanent organizations, those that synthesize all struggle within a single organization, and organizations that mediate struggles with the institutions of domination. Permanent organizations tend to develop into institutions that stand above the struggling multitude. They tend to develop a formal or informal hierarchy and to disempower the multitude: power is alienated from its active form within the multitude and instituted within the organization. This transforms the active multitude into a passive mass. The hierarchical constitution of power relations removes decision from the time such a decision is necessary and places it within the organization. The practical consequence of such an organization is that the active powers of those involved in the struggle are stifled by the organization.

Decisions that should be made by those involved in an action are deferred to the organization; moreover, permanent organizations tend to make decisions based not on the necessity of a specific goal or action, but on the needs of that organization, especially its preservation. The organization becomes an end in itself. One needs only to look at the operations of the many socialist parties to see this in its most blatant form.

As an organization moves towards permanence and comes to stand above the multitude, the *organizer* appears - often claiming to have created the struggle - and begins to speak for the mass. It is the job of the organizer to transform the multitude into a controllable mass and to represent that mass to the media or state institutions. Organizers rarely view themselves as part of the multitude, thus they don't see it as their task to act, but to propagandize and organize, for it is the masses that act.

The Opinion Factory

For the organizer, who takes as their motto 'only that which appears in the media exists', real action always takes a back seat to the maintenance of the media image. The goal of such image maintenance is never to attack a specific institution of domination, but to affect public opinion, to forever build the movement or, even worse, the organization. The organizer must always worry about how the actions of others will reflect on the movement; they must, therefore, both attempt to discipline the struggling multitude and try to control how the movement is represented in the media. Image usually replaces action for the permanent organization and the organizer.

The attempt to control the vast image and opinion-making factories of our society is a losing battle, as if we could ever try to match the quantity of images put forward by the media or get them to 'tell the truth'. Thus, many insurrectionary anarchists have been very critical of carrying on the struggle within the capitalist mass media. In Italy, this has put them at odds with organizations such as *Ya Basta!* who see the media as a key vehicle for their movement; in other parts of the world, the question of how anarchists should relate to the media has been a focus of debate in recent years - especially since 1999 in Seattle - and it is therefore important for us to spell out the critical position of some insurrectionary anarchists.

On a basic level, we need to ask, what is opinion? An opinion is not something first found among the public in general and then, afterwards, replayed through the media, as a simple reporting of the public opinion. An opinion exists in the media first. Secondly, the media then reproduces the opinion a million times over, linking the opinion to a certain type of person (conservatives think *X*, liberals think *Y*). Thirdly, as Alfredo Bonanno points out, "[An opinion] is a flattened idea, an idea that has been uniformed in order to make it acceptable to the largest number of people. Opinions are massified ideas."[6] Public opinion is produced as a series of simple choices or solutions ("I'm for globalization and free trade" or "I'm for more national control and protectionism"). We are all supposed to choose - as we choose our leaders or our burgers - instead of thinking for ourselves. It is obvious, therefore, that anarchists cannot use the opinion-making factory to create counter-opinions, and hopefully anarchists would never want to operate on the level of opinion even if we could somehow exert control over the content spewed out of the factory gates. Anyhow, the ethic of anarchism could never be communicated in the form of opinion; it would die once massified. Yet, it is exactly on the level of opinion that the organizer works, for opinion and image-maintenance are the very tools of power, tools used to shape and discipline a multitude into a controllable mass.

Instead of moving power and decision making into an organization, most insurrectionary anarchists recognize the need to organize in a fashion that lacks the formality and authority which separate organizers and organized; this is called informal organization. Because the organizerï¿½s nature is to plan and control, they often privilege the perpetuation of the organization over other goals. Informal organizations, on the other hand, dissolve when their goal is achieved or abandoned; they do not perpetuate themselves merely for the sake of the organization if the goals that caused people to organize have ceased to exist.

As in the case of the Comiso leagues, informal organization is a means for affinity groups to co-ordinate efforts when necessary. We must always remember that many things can be done more easily by an affinity group or individual, and, in these cases, higher levels of organization just make the decision making process cumbersome - it stifles us. The *smallest* amount of organization necessary to achieve one's aims is always the best to maximize our efforts.

Informal organization must be based on an ethic of autonomous action; autonomy is necessary to prevent our active powers from becoming alienated, to prevent the formation of relations of authority. Autonomy is refusing to obey or give orders, which are always shouted from above or beyond the situation. Autonomy allows decisions to be made when they are necessary, instead of being pre-determined or delayed by the decision of a committee or meeting. This does not mean to say however that we shouldn't think strategically about the future and make agreements or plans. On the contrary, plans and agreements are useful and important. What is emphasized is a flexibility that allows people to discard plans when they become useless. Plans should be adaptable to events as they unfold.

Just as an informal organization must have an ethic of autonomy or it will be transformed into an authoritarian organization, in order to avoid the alienation of our active powers, it must also have an ethic of no compromise with respect to the organizationï¿½s agreed goal. The organizationï¿½s goal should be either moved towards or abandoned. Compromising with those who we oppose (e.g. the state or a corporation) defeats all true opposition, it replaces our power to act with that of our enemies.

The scraps handed down to appease and divert us by those we oppose must be refused. Compromise with any institution of domination (the state, the police, WTO, IMF, 'The Party', etc.) is always the alienation of our power to the very institutions we supposedly wish to destroy; this sort of compromise results in the forfeiture of our power to act decisively, to make decisions and actions when we choose. As such, compromise only makes the state and capital stronger. For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, for those who don't wish to wait for the supposedly appropriate material conditions for revolution, for those who don't want a revolution which is merely the creation of a new power structure but want the destruction of all structures which alienate our power from us, such compromise is contrary to their aims. To continually refuse to compromise is to be in perpetual conflict with the established order and its structures of domination and deprivation. Permanent conflict is uncontrollable autonomous action that does not compromise with power.

Revolutionary Solidarity

Revolutionary solidarity, another central practice of insurrectionary anarchism, allows us to move far beyond the 'send a check' style of solidarity that so pervades the Left, as well as solidarity that relies on petitioning the state for relief or mercy. One example of revolutionary solidarity was Nikos Mazotis' action against TVX Gold in December 1997.[7] Many people in the villages around Strymonikos in Northern Greece were struggling against the installation of a gold metallurgy plant in their area. In solidarity with the villagers, Nikos placed a bomb in the Ministry of Industry and Development that was intended to explode when no one was in the building; unfortunately, it never went off at all. Nikos was sentenced to fifteen years in prison, but is now free. TVX Gold is a multinational company whose headquarters is in Canada, there are thus many points at which revolutionary solidarity with the villagers of Stryminikos could have been enacted. Fundraising on behalf of one's comrades is necessary and surely appreciated, but this can be combined with more active forms of solidarity with those who struggle against our common enemies. Revolutionary solidarity communicates the link between the exploitation and repression of others and our own fate, and it shows people the points at which capitalism or the state operate in similar ways in very different places. By creating links between struggles against the state and capital, revolutionary solidarity has the potential to take our local struggles to a global level.

Moreover, revolutionary solidarity is always an active attack; it always involves the recovery of our own active powers that multiply in combination - in solidarity - with the active powers of others. Many insurrectionary anarchists have been involved in the resistance against the *FIES* prison regime (*Ficheros de Internos de Especial Seguimiento* - Inmate Files for Special Monitoring) in Spain. This is a revolutionary struggle because it is not only aimed at a mere reform, but ultimately its goal is the disappearance of prisons, which involves a radical social change. It is a self-organized struggle, in which there are not any leaders or representatives, neither inside the prisons nor outside, but only solidarity that grows between exploited people both from inside and outside the walls.

One of the primary strengths of informal organization is that it allows anarchists to intervene in intermediate or specific struggles without compromising principles or demanding uniformity of action and politics. Informally organized struggles may be composed of affinity groups with quite different political perspectives from each other. Some people may wish to open the possibility for insurrection, while others are only concerned with an immediate goal. There is no reason why those who share an immediate practical aim but diverge in their long-term goals might not come together. For example, an anti-genetic engineering (GE) group could form and decide to co-ordinate the tearing up test crops and to circulate anti-GE leaflets. In this case those who want an insurrectionary rupture with this social order and those who merely hate genetic engineering could easily work together towards this immediate goal. Groups that take a more insurrectionary approach to action, however, often end up in conflict with other groups working around similar issues. The Earth Liberation Front, an informally organized set of groups which have taken a position of attack on those they see as destroying the earth, have been vilified by the mainstream environmental movement. At the same time, they would probably be critiqued by many insurrectionary anarchists for focusing defensively on the protection of the earth and ignoring the social aspect of revolution. What is important to allow different groups to work together is co-ordination with autonomy.

For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, such co-operation will not close the door on their dreams. Informal organization, with its ethics of autonomy and no compromise, does not control struggle, and uncontrollability opens the possibility for an insurrectionary rupture with the present social order.

Notes

1. See *The Ego and Its Own* by Max Stirner (Rebel Press, London, 1993)

2. 'Anarchists' who generally turn their back on direct action, and use local politics to try and gain reforms and establish 'anarchist controlled' towns.

3. See *Albania; Laboratory of Subversion* by Anonymous (Elephant Editions, London, 1999)

4. See *A Strange and Outcast Poet: The Life and Writings of Renzo Novatore* (Venomous Butterfly Publications)

5. *A Project of Anarchist Organization* by Errico Malatesta (1927) See:

6. *The Anarchist Tension* by Alfredo M. Bonanno (Elephant Editions, London, 1998)

7. When arrested Nikos refused to recognise the authority of the whole legal system. He made a radical anarchist statement to the court during his trial, giving the reasons for the bombing, and explaining his insurrectionary hatred for the state and industry. He's now released.

NEITHER DEMOCRATS, NOR DICTATORS: ANARCHISTS

by Errico Malatesta
from *Pensiero e Volonta* (May 1926)

Theoretically 'democracy' means popular government; government by all for everybody by the efforts of all. In a democracy the people must be able to say what they want, to nominate the executors of their wishes, to monitor their performance and remove them when they see fit.

Naturally this presumes that all the individuals that make up a people are able to form an opinion and express it on all the subjects that interest them. It implies that everyone is politically and economically independent and therefore no-one, to live, would be obliged to submit to the will of others.

If classes and individuals exist that are deprived of the means of production and therefore dependent on others with a monopoly over those means, the so-called democratic system can only be a lie, and one which serves to deceive the mass of the people and keep them docile with an outward show of sovereignty, while the rule of the privileged and dominant class is in fact salvaged and consolidated. Such is democracy and such it always has been in a capitalist structure, whatever form it takes, from constitutional monarchy to so-called direct rule.

There could be no such thing as a democracy, a government of the people, other than in a socialistic regime, when the means of production and of living are socialised and the right of all to intervene in the running of public affairs is based on and guaranteed by the economic independence of every person. In this case it would seem that the democratic system was the one best able to guarantee justice and to harmonise individual independence with the necessities of life in society. And so it seemed, more or less clearly, to those who, in the era of the absolute monarchs, fought, suffered and died for freedom.

But for the fact that, looking at things as they really are, the government of all the people turns out to be an impossibility, owing to the fact that the individuals who make up the people have differing opinions and desires and it never, or almost never happens, that on any one question or problem all can be in agreement. Therefore the 'government of all the people', if we have to have government, can at best be only the government of the majority. And the democrats, whether socialists or not, are willing to agree. They add, it is true, that one must respect minority rights; but since it is the majority that decides what these rights are, as a result minorities only have the right to do what the majority wants and allows. The only limit to the will of the majority would be the resistance which the minorities know and can put up. This means that there would always be a social struggle, in which a part of the members, albeit the majority, has the right to impose its own will on the others, yoking the efforts of all to their own ends.

And here I would make an aside to show how, based on reasoning backed by the evidence of past and present events, it is not even true that where there is government, namely authority, that authority resides in the majority and how in reality every 'democracy' has been, is and must be nothing short of an 'oligarchy' – a government of the few, a dictatorship. But, for the purposes of this article, I prefer to err on the side of the democrats and assume that there can really be a true and sincere majority government.

Government means the right to make the law and to impose it on everyone by force: without a police force there is no government.

Now, can a society live and progress peacefully for the greater good of all, can it gradually adapt to ever-changing circumstances if the majority has the right and the means to impose its will by force on the recalcitrant minorities?

The majority is, by definition, backward, conservative, enemy of the new, sluggish in thought and deed and at the same time impulsive, immoderate, suggestible, facile in its enthusiasms and irrational fears. Every new idea stems from one or a few individuals, is accepted, if viable, by a more or less sizeable minority and wins over the majority, if ever, only after it has been superseded by new ideas and new needs and has already become outdated and rather an obstacle, rather than a spur to progress.

But do we, then, want a minority government?

Certainly not. If it is unjust and harmful for a majority to oppress minorities and obstruct progress, it is even more unjust and harmful for a minority to oppress the whole population or impose its own ideas by force which even if they are good ones would excite repugnance and opposition because of the very fact of being imposed.

And then, one must not forget that there are all kinds of different minorities. There are minorities of egoists and villains as there are of fanatics who believe themselves to be possessed of absolute truth and, in perfectly good faith, seek to impose on others what they hold to be the only way to salvation, even if it is simple silliness. There are minorities of reactionaries who seek to turn back the clock and are divided as to the paths and limits of reaction. And there are revolutionary minorities, also divided on the means and ends of revolution and on the direction that social progress should take.

Which minority should take over?

This is a matter of brute force and capacity for intrigue, and the odds that success would fall to the most sincere and most devoted to the general good are not favourable. To conquer power one needs qualities that are not exactly those that are needed to ensure that justice and well-being will triumph in the world.

But I shall here continue to give others the benefit of the doubt and assume that a minority came to power which, among those who aspire to government, I considered the best for its ideas and proposals. I want to assume that the socialists came to power and would add, also the anarchists, if I am not prevented by a contradiction in terms.

This would be the worst of all?

An established government, founded on the passive consensus of the majority and strong in numbers, in tradition and in the sentiment – sometimes sincere – of being in the right, can leave some space to liberty, at least so long as the privileged classes do not feel threatened. A new government, which relies for support only on an often slender minority, is obliged through necessity to be tyrannical.

One need only think what the socialists and communists did when they came to power, either betraying their principles and comrades or by flying colours in the name of socialism and communism.

This is why we are neither for a majority nor for a minority government; neither for democracy not for dictatorship.

We are for the abolition of the gendarme. We are for the freedom of all and for free agreement, which will be there for all when no one has the means to force others, and all are involved in the good running of society. We are for anarchy.

THE BORDERS OF DEMOCRACY:
IMMIGRANTS MURDERED, REBELS IN JAIL

5 anarchists were arrestred in Lecce on 12th May, following the usual investigation for 'conspiracy'. 'Capolinea Occupato', the anarchist squat in Lecce, has been raided and closed down.

These comrades, well known for their continuous, strong and uncompromising struggle against the detentions camp for immigrants, were becoming a real pain in the neck. Detention camps are true concentration camps, even if the language of the State calls them 'temporary stay centres', and the brutality of the local 'Regina Pacis' towards immigrants emerged so clearly that its director, priest Cesare Lodeserto, has ended up in jail. Added to this, a great number of imprisoned immigrants have started to revolt bravely and firmly; so the voice of those who have been denouncing the crimes of the whole system of immigration had to be silenced.

These comrades have been accused of attacking 'Regina Pacis' property and its financial supporters, of sabotaging a few Esso petrol stations and carrying out direct actions against Benetton shops.

We do not care if they are innocent or guilty, for us what is right cannot be found in the penal code. If they are innocent they can count on our solidarity, if they are guilty they can count on it even more. To struggle against people who lock up men and women whose only 'crime' is that they are poor and without the right papers; to present a small bill to those who get rich thanks to the genocide in Iraq (Esso) or by deporting Mapuche people (Benetton): these are practises we totally agree with.The attack on the exploited is always the same: bombardment, detention camps, banks, multinationals, etc.

The same day our comrades in Lecce were arrested, police in Turin raided and evicted a gypsy camp, killed a man from Senegal at a road block, caused another immigrant to die while he was attempting to escape. You think that's enough? Well, it's not.

Immigrants in via Corelli camp (Milan) have been on hunger strike for weeks, protesting on the roof and shouting out their desire for freedom. Meantime, hundreds of refugees arriving in Italy are imprisoned in 'welcome centres' from which they will soon try to escape at any cost.

These are the cries from the remains of a rotten world in ruins. We can pretend not to hear them. We can hypocritically celebrate the struggle against nazi-fascism without realising that concentration camps are part of the present, not the past.

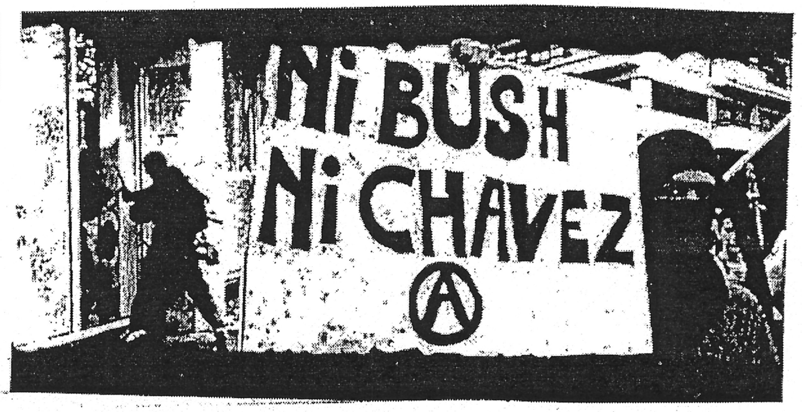
We can find shelter in respect for the law, the same law that is waved at millions of 'indesiderables'. Alternatively, we can decide to stand up and find the sense of what is right in ourselves, using our hands and our hearts.

We can either hide or fight.

The best way to solidarise with the Lecce anarchists is to carry on the struggle to close the detention camps for immigrants and stop the machinery of expulsion.

For a world without borders.

Anarchists under investigation



Protest against capital and its democracy of the rich at the University of Chile *translated from Hommodolars (autonomous collective of counter-information)*
Thursday, December 8th, 2005

Yesterday, once again*, at the Juan Gomez Millas campus of the University of Chile (in Santiago), masked demonstrators broke with the tranquility and passivity imposed by capital and fought for nearly 40 minutes against police using firebombs and stones.

Propaganda was spread (through shouting, leaflets, banners, and graffiti) indicating that the main reason for this direct action was the upcoming elections which perpetuate exploitation and domination by the rich.

Some slogans and graffiti messages (which included the circle A symbol for anarchism) used in relation to this direct action:

"Against the electoral circus! In the streets!"

"Against the democracy of the rich - struggle in the streets"

"Elections prolong slavery and we denounce and fight them"

"Because the vote only makes the rich powerful, we've chosen violence"

"Against the election of future exploiters"

"Against all authority, verticalism and central committees"

**Masked demonstrators carried out a similar action, for the same reason, outside the campus at the end of November*

some comments about the alleged 'war on terrorism'

by michael brüll

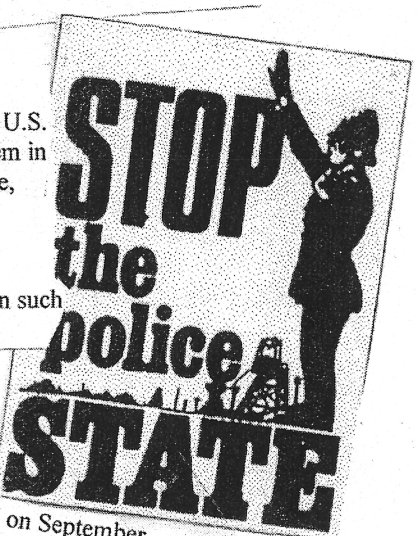
Since 2001, we have heard quite a bit in the media about a "war on terrorism". I must say, I never took this seriously. I remember, a few years ago, I was speaking to a friend, who is generally unpolitical, but nevertheless saw fit to vote for Howard. I asked her why. We went through some of her reasons for her vote, and, it turned out, one of them happened to be the "war on terrorism". I admit, this confused me a little. I asked her if she meant the war on Iraq or Afghanistan.

Nope. As it turned out, there is a sincere belief, moderately widespread, that there is a "war on terrorism," and countries like Australia and America are involved in it. Indeed, "we" are against "terrorism". I'm sorry to use quotation marks like this, which often irks me, but I think I ought to make plain that the precision of these terms is not what one might hope for.

I was perhaps a bit naïve, as I previously assumed everyone knew the "war on terrorism" was some sort of metaphor, signifying that various governments considered 9/11 bad. However, people do often take it quite seriously, so I would like to point out some obvious problems with what I will call the official story.

The first problem with the alleged war on terrorism is what, precisely, is meant by terrorism. When we saw the planes crashing into the Twin Towers, everyone knew that was terrorism. But is there any other terrorism in the world? We can start with a moderately plain definition – terrorism is the use or threat of force against civilians to attain political ends. Nevertheless, definitions of terrorism are routinely avoided, because of the unpleasant implications of doing so. For example, Edward Peck says:

> [i]n 1985, when I was the Deputy Director of the Reagan White House Task Force on Terrorism, they asked us -- this is a Cabinet Task Force on Terrorism; I was the Deputy Director of the working group -- they asked us to come up with a definition of terrorism that could be used throughout the government. We produced about six, and each and every case, they were rejected, because careful reading would indicate that our own country had been involved in some of those activities.



After the task force concluded its work, Congress got into it, and you can google into U.S. Code Title 18, Section 2331, and read the U.S. definition of terrorism. And one of them in here says -- one of the terms, "international terrorism," means "activities that," I quote, "appear to be intended to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping".

Yes, well, certainly, you can think of a number of countries that have been involved in such activities. Ours is one of them. Israel is another.[i]

Now, everyone knows that murder, and even the murder of civilians, was not invented on September 11. However, the charge that "we" – lovely white people that we are – would ever commit such a horrendous crime seems outlandish. It is not something you hear in polite society. Nevertheless, for those with some slight interest in history, we learn unpleasant facts, that generally go uncovered. For example, a CIA report on Palestine in 1947 is now available online. It says the Stern Gang consisted of 400-500 "extreme fanatics," an offshoot formed by the "most extreme section" of the Irgun, to form the "more terroristic" Stern Gang, though the authors candidly recognised the "sabotage and terrorism" the Irgun employed.[ii] The Stern Gang, despite its pro-Nazi leanings, later produced a Prime Minister of Israel, as did the Irgun, both of whom received the standard US support for Israeli rejectionism, apartheid and atrocities. Even those who know of history are generally sheltered from obvious moral judgements, like the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – terrorism under any reasonable definition.

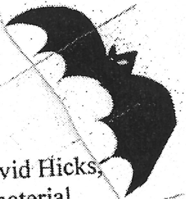
Nevertheless, the war on terrorism, quite obviously, was never supposed to refer to things "we" do, which, practically by definition, cannot be terrorism. Only could atrocities committed against us – and nowadays, this means by Muslims – be called terrorism. This has some interesting results, which is presumably why the media generally ignores discussing history. An interesting speech worth reading is Eqbal Ahmad's "Terrorism: Theirs and Ours" from 1998, three years before September 11. In it, we learn:

> [i]n 1985, President Ronald Reagan received a group of bearded men in the White House. I was writing about these bearded men in those days in the *New Yorker*. They were very ferocious-looking bearded men with turbans who looked as though they came from another century. After receiving them, President Reagan spoke to the press. He pointed toward them, I'm sure some of you will recall that moment, and said, "These men are the moral equivalent of America's founding fathers." These were the Afghan Mujahideen. They were at the time, guns in hand, battling the Evil Empire. They were the moral equivalent of our founding fathers.

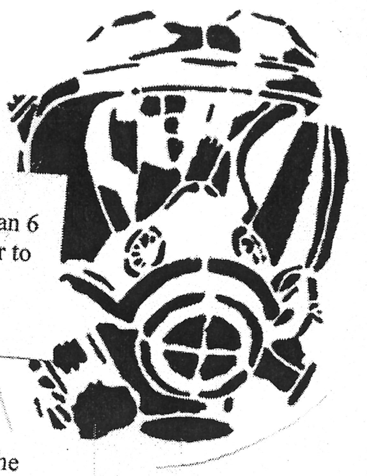
In August 1998, another American president ordered missile strikes from the American navy based in the Indian Ocean to kill Osama bin Laden and his men in the camps in Afghanistan. I do not wish to embarrass you with the reminder that Mr bin Laden, whom fifteen American missiles were fired to hit in Afghanistan, was only a few years ago the moral equivalent of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson![v]

Our past has many more unpleasant facts, and current US support for men "from another century" in Afghanistan might prove embarrassing in thirteen years time too. Besides the hundreds of thousands of civilians America has killed across Afghanistan and Iraq, in addition to the support it has provided to the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. We might tarry slightly over Somalia, in a situation which, by UN estimate in May this year, was "worse than Darfur".[vi] We hear practically nothing about that either, because, quite typically, the war on terrorism is devoted to fighting the murder of white people, which is what marks out September 11, 2001 as uniquely evil in the canon of our wonderful media. For a handful of people, September 11 might have already had meaning as a day of a horrendous calamity. But our media, devoted to insisting that we are in a "war on terrorism," necessarily has to engage in historical amnesia, combined with selective blindness.

So, if we grant the problem of defining the word terrorism, we might find that instead of waging a "war" on it, "we" are continuing our longstanding support for it. But let's put aside the racist hypocrisy for now. Let us suppose that we know what is meant by terrorism – the sort of thing radical Islamic fundamentalists like Osama engage in. Surely, al Qaeda's ideology is horrifying, and their crimes against humanity unforgivable. But let us have a closer look at how the "war on terrorism" manifests itself. Firstly and most obviously, there have been curtailments on government protections of civil liberties across the world – in the US, in India, in the UK, in Australia and so on. This is perhaps the most serious action these governments have taken, though there is little reason to suppose that this will prevent terrorism. Indeed, in the alleged war on terrorism, we have also found such horrors as the outsourcing of torture, known as extraordinary rendition. The horrors of people in nameless concentration camps across the world, in addition to that of Guantanamo, is supposedly in the name of the war on terrorism. If we knew the inmates were terrorists, we could predict that this would prevent terrorism. However, as the inmates are held indefinitely, without conviction, we have no actual evidence that this constitutes any action to prevent terrorism.



Nevertheless, let's turn to one of the convicted inmates from Guantanamo. Our very own, David Hicks, convicted, in somewhat farcical manner, after years of detention and torture, for providing "material support for terrorism". Suppose, for the sake of argument, that there was some legitimacy to the process. Training with terrorists does not seem to me to constitute "material support" for terrorism. Nevertheless, granting Osama is an evil man comes as no problem for me. I think that those who provide material support for his horrendous crimes should be made to account for it, although in accordance with basic canons of habeas corpus and so on. And as it so happens, we have an open confession, extracted without any torture or other forms of coercion. Fortunately, we have an extract of the interview (taken in 1998) transcribed, and publicly available:



Question: The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, stated in his memoirs ["From the Shadows"], that American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan 6 months before the Soviet intervention. In this period you were the national security adviser to President Carter. You therefore played a role in this affair. Is that correct?

[Zbigniew] Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.

Q: And neither do you regret having supported the Islamic fundamentalism, having given arms and advice to future terrorists?

B: What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?[vii]

Q: Despite this risk, you were an advocate of this covert action. But perhaps you yourself desired this Soviet entry into war and looked to provoke it?

B: It isn't quite that. We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.

Q: When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them. However, there was a basis of truth. You don't regret anything today?

B: Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter. We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire.

As noted by Eqbal Ahmad, the US government supported the fanatical Islamic extremists who committed unspeakable atrocities in Afghanistan. Brzezinski, as part of the "Human Rights Administration" of Jimmy Carter, provided massive, or dare I say, "material support" for these terrorists. If there was any seriousness in the alleged war on terrorism, Brzezinski, Gates and Carter would be among the first convicted of the crime later invented to imprison Hicks.

There is much else. Consider, for example, the severity of the problem of terrorism. Surely, terrorism – and by terrorism, I mean terrorism in the conventional sense, that against white people – is horrible. However, the scale of its threat is vastly overplayed by the media. Gerard Henderson is familiar with this argument, but bewildered by it. He notes Julian Burnside's words: "The average worldwide death toll from terrorism each year is 600 to 700 people - which makes it one of the least likely ways to die. Westerners are 100,000 times more likely to die in a car accident than in a terrorist attack." He noted Michael Kirby:

> The Americans, with all respect, have become completely obsessed with September 11 [2001] and that is not an event which occurred in this country and I think we have to keep our eye on the threats to Australia. I mean, more people die every day from AIDS than died on September 11.[viii]

Dystopian fantasies aside of terrorist lunatics aside, the terrorist threat to "our way of life" is largely that of claiming a small number of victims, and threatening the level of safety we are relatively fortunate to live in, especially when one considers how people live in other parts of the world. Of course, rational people recognise that miserable conditions play an important recruiting role for terrorists, desperate to strike back against those who support their oppressors. After September 11, this became a taboo topic – that an obvious way to lessen the threat of future terrorist atrocities was to stop providing grievances to suffering people across the world.

Interestingly, the connections between support for hideous dictatorships across the Middle East, hatred for the US and terrorism against it, were denounced as anti-American, pro-terrorist and whatever else to divert attention from their obvious basis in reality. Recently, this connection was made by a particularly prominent man, who, one might suspect is almost professionally devoted to fostering anti-American sentiment. His words read:

> Still, some argue that a safer goal would be stability, especially in the Middle East. The problem is that pursuing stability at the expense of liberty does not lead to peace -- it leads to September the 11th, 2001. (Applause.) The policy of tolerating tyranny is a moral and strategic failure. It is a mistake the world must not repeat in the 21st century.[ix]

He is the President of the US, and his name is George W Bush. He recognises plainly that the US has pursued policies that "lead" to 9/11, and he continues to pursue exactly that policy of "tolerating tyranny" – that is, what Tariq Ali calls "kleptocracies," which plunder their people in the interests of the US. This is called "stability," and the US continues to support it across the Middle East. If the American government wanted to launch a war on "terrorism," defined in the sense indicated, it knows from the President down, how to do so.

Nevertheless, for those who subscribe to vacuous racist fantasies, it is supposed to follow that there is a clash of civilisations – the values of the West, against the backwards, evil, nihilistic and fascist values of the Muslim hordes, threatening to devour us. It would be difficult to satirise this nonsense. It is a little short of reality in representing Islamic values. The fact is every society contains different people and different opinions. As it so happens, and as has already been noted, some of the most horrendous elements have received tremendous Western support. As does Saudi Arabia, which is perhaps the most extremist Islamic fundamentalist state in the world, with a horrendous human rights record.[x] This is a neat illustration of "Western" values – the things "we" hold dear.

I think a final issue in the alleged war on terrorism should be discussed. That is, the prejudice it often entails against Muslims. If terrorism is supposed to be a uniquely Muslim phenomenon, which it isn't, this conclusion is helped. There is the inconvenience that there are over a billion Muslims, but only a few dozen have committed "terrorism" – that is, murdered Western civilians in the West. Nevertheless, this is supposed to prove some collective evil of the Islamic community. This is of course, in the strict sense, indicative of prejudice – that a community has collective responsibility for the actions of its members. Such was the logic of Kristallnacht (a pre-WWII Jewish pogrom), which was preceded by an act of Jewish terrorism.

As it so happens, the feel-good theory of the "good-Western-us" against them is not innovative. Bertrand Russell commented, in his typically intelligent manner on this.

> Some opponents of Communism are attempting to produce an ideology for the Atlantic Powers, and for this purpose they have invented what they call 'Western Values.' These are supposed to consist of toleration, respect for individual liberty, and brotherly love. I am afraid this view is grossly unhistorical. If we compare Europe with other continents, it is marked out as the persecuting continent. Persecution only ceased after long and bitter experience of its futility; it continued as long as either Protestants or Catholics had any hope of exterminating the opposite party. The European record in this respect is far blacker than that of the Mohammedans, the Indians or the Chinese.

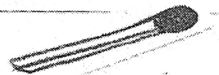
Then as now, there are those who support human rights, and those who do not. There are Muslims who support human rights, and struggle against Western opposition to their aspirations. There are Westerners who support human rights and hope to overcome the Muslim forces who do not, like the House of Saud, and al Qaeda. Those of us who hope to belong to this camp are the ones who believe in waging a war on terrorism, and we should refuse to let anyone tell us otherwise.

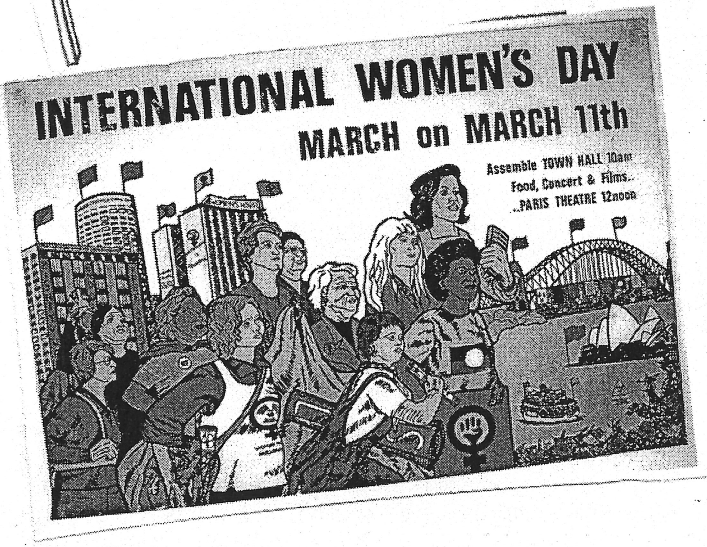
Let the walls speak: 30 years of passionate dissent
Political poster exhibition

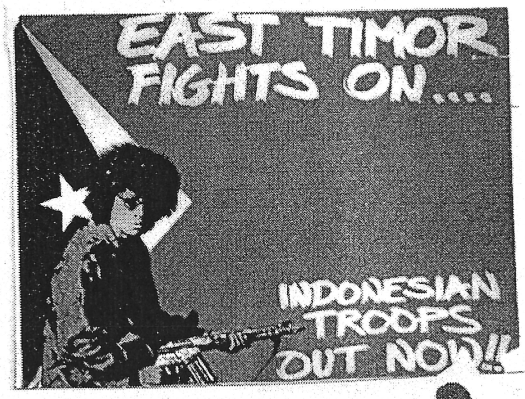
Let us paint a scene for you: a government smashing student unions, big business crushing workers, police beating up anti-war protesters. But at the same time there are people are fighting back: women marching against violence, students shutting down uranium mines and Aborigines re-claiming their land.

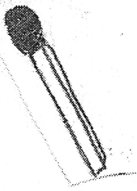
This isn't just 2007, it's 1997, 1987, and 1977. And at key moments, art has played a crucial role in the struggle - illustrating and inspiring the power of social movements.

In 2007 **Jura Books** turns 30, and this exhibition is part of the celebration. For three decades Jura has been a base and an expression of many campaigns and movements, and has been collecting political posters. **Let the Walls Speak: 30 Years of Passionate Dissent** will be an exhibition of the best of political posters from the last thirty years of social struggle in Australia. Jura is co-presenting the exhibition with the University of Sydney Union over the APEC period – to bring art to the protest, and the protest to the art gallery.

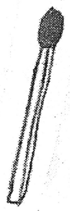





EAST TIMOR FIGHTS ON....
INDONESIAN TROOPS OUT NOW!!



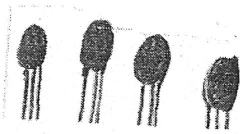
The poster collection was re-discovered a few years ago gathering dust in the archives of the Jura Books. This will be the first time they have been exhibited outside of Jura. There are now over 3,000 in the collection, from a diverse range of struggles ranging from early Aboriginal Land Rights struggles, the feminist movement, the Green Bans, anti-uranium mining, anti-Fraser and many many more. We'll be showing a careful selection of about 100 posters.



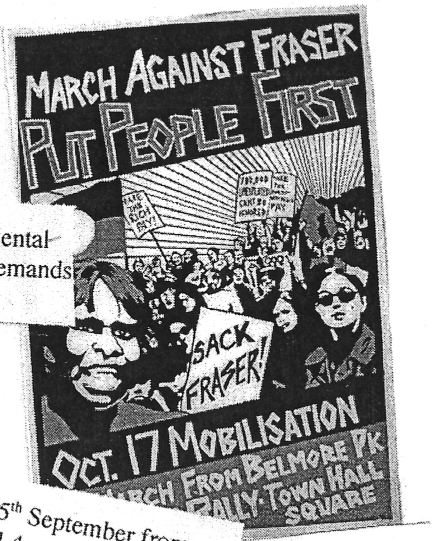
Some of the most stunning posters are from the artist collectives which operated in the 1980s out of the (then squatted) Sydney Uni **Tin Sheds**. Powerful, eloquent and moving, these full colour posters use silk screening craft and artistic techniques unique to Australia and which have rarely been used since.

The most famous of these activist art collectives was the Earthworks Poster Collective, but the collection also contains posters from Lucifoil, Without Authority Posters, Redback Graphix, Toby Zoates and many others.

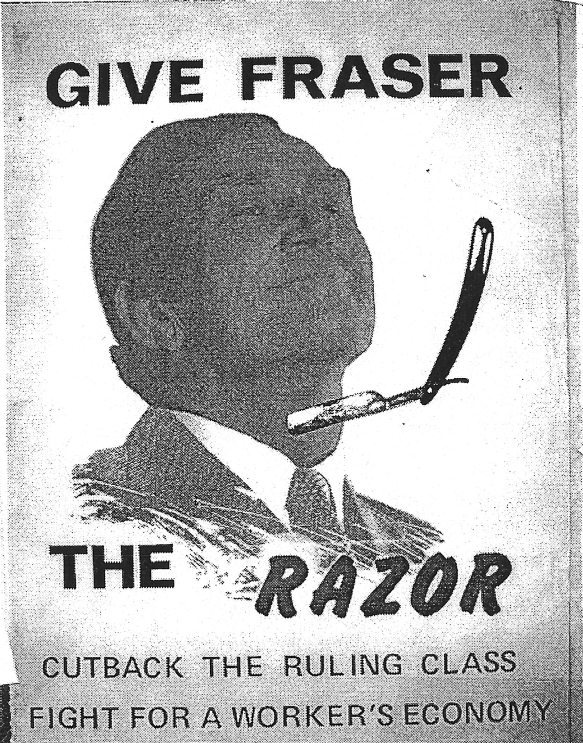
Not only are the subjects of the posters political, but the method used to produce them was democratic and non-elitist – anyone could produce a poster with a little training and a lot of passion and dedication. The Earthworks Poster Collective would invite student and community groups to use the facilities, and often shared their skills with those who were just starting out using the silk screen processes.



At the same time as APEC politicians discuss prolonging the war, profiting from environmental devastation and silencing dissent, come and feast your eyes on the alternative: art which demands action and envisages a better world. Let the walls speak!


MARCH AGAINST FRASER
PUT PEOPLE FIRST
SACK FRASER!
OCT. 17 MOBILISATION
MARCH FROM BELMORE PK
RALLY: TOWN HALL SQUARE

When? From the 5th September to the 19th. The opening night is on Wednesday 5th September from 5pm, with talks by some of the original artists. After that it will be open 10am till 4pm everyday except the 7th, 8th and 9th.
Where? Sydney University Holme Building, the Bevery (on the Parramatta Rd side of the campus)
How much? Entry is by donation. And all proceeds will go to preserving the posters, which may not survive for another thirty years otherwise.


GIVE FRASER
THE RAZOR
CUTBACK THE RULING CLASS
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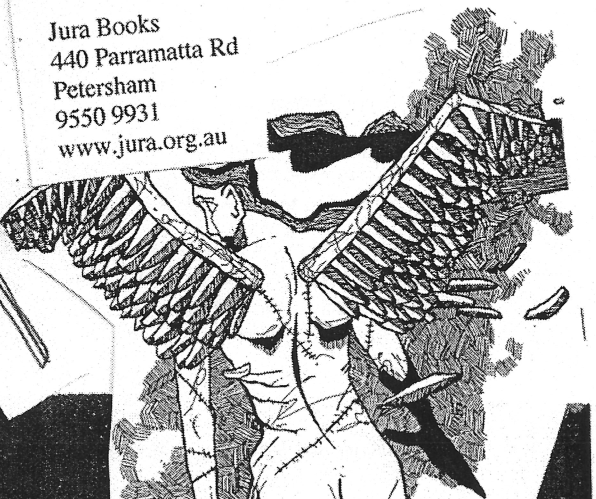
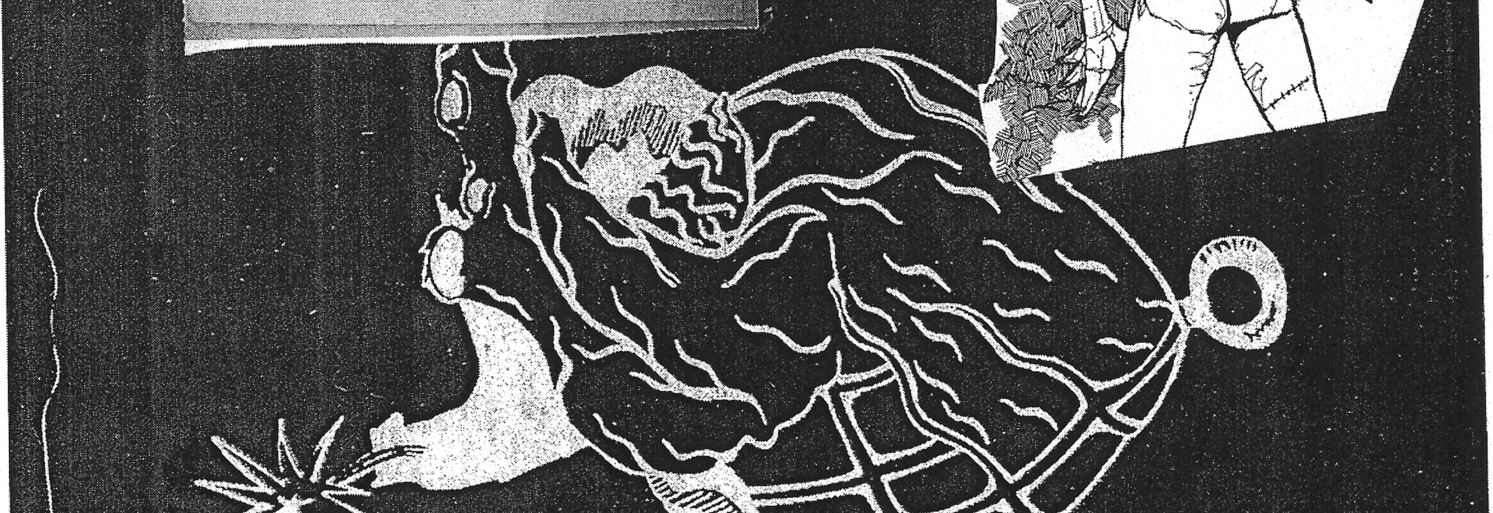
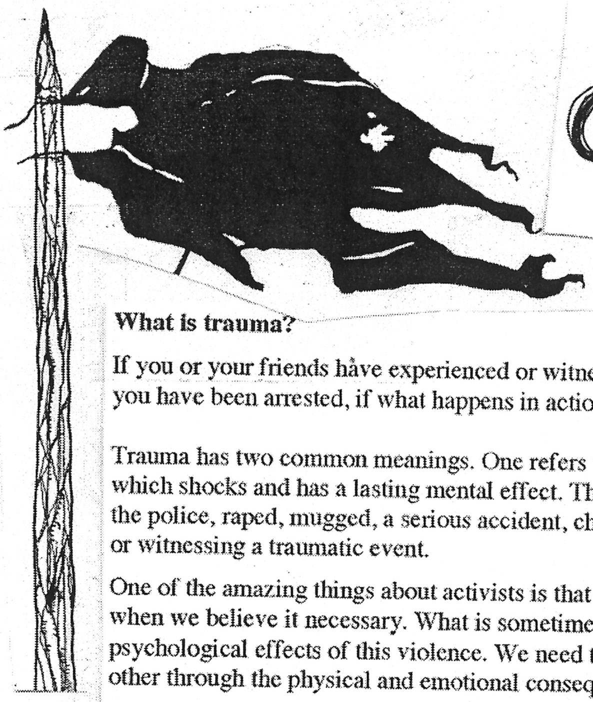






activist trauma

What is trauma?

If you or your friends have experienced or witnessed police violence (or violence from anyone else), if you have been arrested, if what happens in actions brings up old memories,

Trauma has two common meanings. One refers to serious bodily injury, the second is an experience which shocks and has a lasting mental effect. These experiences can be, for example, being attacked by the police, raped, mugged, a serious accident, child abuse, the sudden unexpected death of a loved one, or witnessing a traumatic event.

One of the amazing things about activists is that we often deliberately expose ourselves to brutality when we believe it necessary. What is sometimes equally surprising is how little we know about the psychological effects of this violence. We need to prepare ourselves and learn how to support each other through the physical and emotional consequences of trauma.

What is post-traumatic stress?

The body responds to a traumatic event by releasing adrenaline, a hormone that prepares the body to flee or fight. Adrenaline and another chemical norepinephrine stimulate the amygdale, a structure deep in our brain that spurs the formation of vivid, emotional memories of the threat. In evolutionary terms, that is a good survival strategy – for example, putting a hunter on high alert if she later nears the same cave where an animal attacked her.

After a trauma this can take a while to settle down as you (your mind and body) process what happened to you. This is called post traumatic stress or post trauma syndrome (PTS).

People's reactions to traumatic events vary enormously. Some people experience no ill-effects at all. Others experience strong physical and/or emotional reactions. These are common and a normal part of coming to terms with your experiences.

Sometimes reactions happen immediately after the traumatic event, sometimes they might appear hours or days later. Sometimes they can appear weeks or months afterwards. Remember that these symptoms are natural reactions to very disturbing situations, and some of these symptoms are attempts of your body and your brain trying to protect you.,

If you've been in a traumatic situation, you might experience some of the following things:

Intrusions: Re-experiencing the events as flashbacks or nightmares that occur suddenly, without conscious control. These are very distressing, disrupting sleep and normal activities of life.

Hyper-alertness: A state of hyper-vigilance or increased sensitivity to things such as a phone ringing or the sudden appearance of a person which leads to a physical reaction (eg jumping with fear; feeling nauseous) which is out of proportion to the stimulus. The person is edgy, agitated and appears to be on the lookout for a perceived danger.

Avoidance: The person tends to avoid anything (eg certain places, going out at night, being alone) that may result in a memory of or a feeling from the original traumatic experience. This symptom particularly impacts upon interpersonal relationships. The person may report feeling emotionally numb; unable to experience their usual feelings for people and things, and will often act very impersonally to people with whom they are closest.

Other Characteristic Symptoms of PTS

Often the person finds it difficult to trust others or to feel safe and secure anywhere. As this continues the person becomes detached from friends, colleagues and family, thus adding to his/her isolation. Furthermore, the person may experience physical signs of anxiety such as rapid breathing, sweating and becoming agitated. Poor sleep patterns (due to insomnia and nightmares) affect concentration and memory, and can lead to deterioration of work and study performance.

What if I'm experiencing these reactions?

Its important to remember that post-trauma stress reactions are a NORMAL reaction to an ABNORMAL EVENT. It might be pretty scary, but you are not going crazy, you are not *"not coping"*.

If you think of it like having a meal – your stomach needs time to break down the food. When you've been through a scary and upsetting experience, your mind and body needs to break it down and make sense of it.

Its important to not fight it, but to understand that its all part of a process of recovery.

These are some ideas that may help:

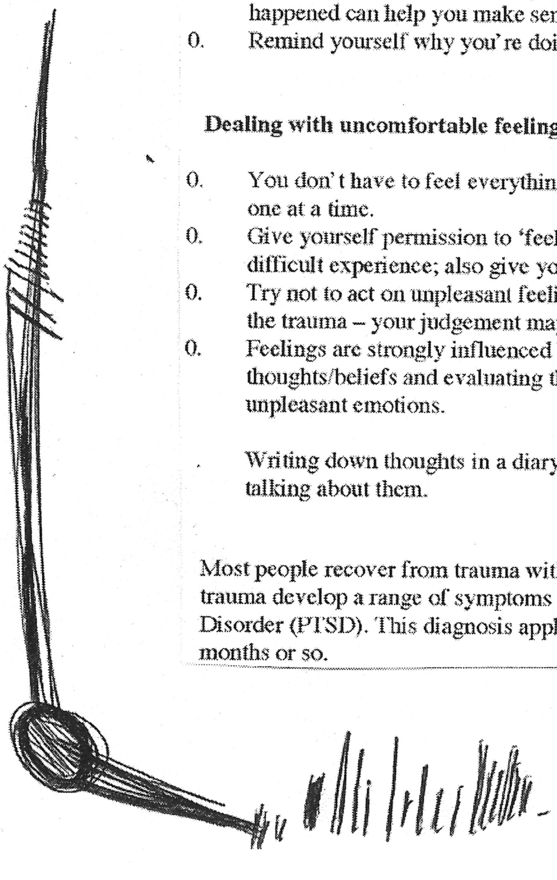
0. Remember to breathe. Even three deep breaths will help.
0. It is important that you don't compare yourself to others. Everyone is an individual and everyone has their own experience. There are a number of reasons why people react differently to the same, or similar events.
. Emotional turmoil is to be expected. It may feel overwhelming at times, this may reflect adjustments your body and mind needs to make to heal yourself.
0. Try to rest more, even if you can't sleep. The body and mind repair when resting.
0. Make time for relaxation. Breathing exercises, meditation and yoga can be very useful.
0. If possible, continue with regular exercise; exercise and relaxation will help you reduce nervous tension and feeling 'hyped up'. If you are unsure about whether you should exercise because of physical injuries, seek advice from a medical professional.
0. Sometimes you will want to be alone, but try not to become too isolated as distressing feelings can appear greater when you are by yourself.
. Reduce your intake of stimulants such as tea, coffee, cola, chocolate and spicy, hot food as these can make you feel more uptight.
0. Avoid street drugs and alcohol; numbing or suppressing feelings and unusual physical sensations may create problems in the future. You may be tempted to increase your use of tobacco, but try to resist this.
0. Treat yourself to things you normally enjoy
0. Identify when your mood is low and do something about it
0. Don't let gloomy or negative thoughts get the better of you – stop them and replace them with counter arguments. What would you say to a friend to challenge them if they thought that way?
0. It can be helpful to distract yourself from negative thoughts. Study something in detail – the shape of a flower, buttons on a shirt etc
0. Continue to talk to your affinity group, your family, friends and others in your life about your trauma, your reactions and feelings as this will help you master your distressing symptoms. Even if you feel detached from other people, don't reject their support. Talking to people about what happened can help you make sense of it
0. Remind yourself why you're doing this and what you have achieved

Dealing with uncomfortable feelings

0. You don't have to feel everything at once – you can deal with unpleasant feelings and memories one at a time.
0. Give yourself permission to 'feel lousy' from time to time, after all you have been through a difficult experience; also give yourself permission to distract yourself with pleasant activities.
0. Try not to act on unpleasant feelings and make major life decisions until you have recovered from the trauma – your judgement may be impaired.
0. Feelings are strongly influenced by thoughts and beliefs; by monitoring your negative thoughts/beliefs and evaluating their usefulness to you in your recovery, you can begin to master unpleasant emotions.

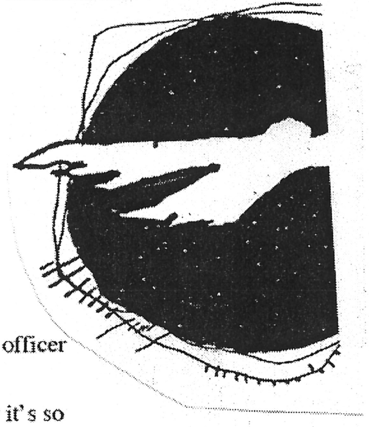
. Writing down thoughts in a diary or writing letters you may not send can almost be as good as talking about them.

Most people recover from trauma within a few weeks. However, some 20-30% of people exposed to trauma develop a range of symptoms which the mental health system calls Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This diagnosis applies when stress symptoms do not disappear after a couple of months or so.



What causes PTSD?

PTSD happens when your system doesn't settle after a trauma – kind of going overboard. In that case, memories and environmental cues provoke out-of proportion fear responses to ordinary situations and your everyday functioning is impaired.



Why do some people recover from a trauma while others don't?

The following appear to make it more likely that a person will develop PTSD:

0. the more severe the trauma
0. the longer it lasted
. the closer the person was to it
0. the more dangerous it seemed
0. the more times the person has been traumatised in the past
0. if the trauma was inflicted deliberately by other people (eg., police and prison officer brutality)
0. if the person gets negative reactions from friends and relatives – which is why it's so important to support each other more effectively
0. the longer it took to get into safe/supported circumstances afterwards – the first minutes and hours can make a massive difference.

What can I do to minimise the chance of being traumatised?

0. Be prepared. Being aware of potential violence will reduce the shock-factor.
0. Understand that planned violence is a strategy used by the police and armed forces to suppress and contain civil actions
0. Some activists use meditation, martial arts, other eastern disciplines (like tai chi, chi gung) to help prepare for, and recover from, events where there may be trauma. They can help ground you, give you focus, confidence, and help you defend yourself, physically and mentally.
0. If an action/demo is coming where there may be traumatic events, plan your support and a debriefing session afterwards. Plan to do nice stuff afterwards, and take time off. Encourage your group to do this also.
0. Emotional awareness in preparatory group meetings is important, to enable people to talk through their feelings.
0. Knowledge of post-traumatic stress is important, because if traumatic events occur, you will be better supported by people who already know about PTS, and you will be better able to help others.
. Good immediate support will help lessen the symptoms or even onset of PTSD.
0. Taking vigorous exercise immediately after may help to release stored-up adrenalin.
0. On the day, bear in mind the 'golden hour' which medics speak of, as that may also be the vital time for limiting the emotional impact of a trauma. In the minutes, hours, and day/s after a trauma, assist a trauma survivor to:
0. get somewhere safe and calm
0. be cared for medically and/or homeopathically,
0. eat and drink good food stay warm — one of the body's responses to shock is to feel very cold
0. be listened to
0. not be left alone
. know what has happened to friends/family, and know any children will be cared for
0. know that support will be available for the next few days to safely experience whatever emotions may arise not take on new responsibilities and have old obligations taken away for the time being.
0. An activist's immediate response to trauma may well be – 'I'm fine, leave me alone, I have to go and… rescue my friends/ throw myself back into the fray/ go to work in a couple of hours/ single-handedly look after my children/ do prisoner support/ attend the big post-protest party… These may be the choices that make the difference between taking a month or ten years to recover from

the trauma. Discuss the right response to trauma in advance, with our friends, action groups, and communities, and attempt to commit in advance to the appropriate response, regardless of how 'fine' we feel at the time.

What Can Families And Friends Do To Help?

The support of friends and families is enormously important, and cannot be overstated. (Lack of support and understanding, on the other hand, contributes to the persistence of trauma.)

Don't expect a traumatized person to recover quickly. Some will, but some won't be able to do that. If someone is taking a long time to recover from a crisis, offer your support repeatedly, so that they do not feel alone. But be respectful, don't push them.

A traumatized person may have symptoms which are very hard for those around them to deal with, for example anger or withdrawal. Bear in mind that the traumatized person is not deliberately acting this way: it is the trauma which makes them behave like this. Don't take it personally but recognize it as a symptom and as a sign that they need your support.

Things you can do include:

0. Be a good listener.

. Spend normal time with them, especially in the early days following the event;

0. Offer support and assistance even when they have not asked for it;

0. Reassure them that they are safe, that distressing symptoms will pass and that these reactions are understandable given what they have experienced. One of the most important things you can do is to give the message: 'You are not to blame – and you are not alone. This is normal and it will pass.'

0. Don't tell them to get over it. People are tempted, time and time again, to encourage the person to stop reliving and simply forget about the trauma and get on with life. Unfortunately, this seemingly reasonable advice is usually not helpful in this situation and is likely to make things worse, as it may make the person feel even more isolated and hopeless.

0. The person may need to talk about the traumatic events over and over again, and one of the best things family members and friends can do is to be patient and sympathetic listeners so the person feels less alone. It may be the case that the person doesn't want to talk about it, in which case don't force them because they might shut down on you.

0. Don't take their anger or moodiness personally

0. It is also important to have realistic expectations while the person is recovering and not to expect too much or too little from the person. Encourage your loved one to join a PTSD support group.

0. Learn about the disorder and encourage the person to stick with treatment even if it is painful.

0. Offer practical help, like cooking, childcare, shopping.

0. Also, when the symptoms of PTSD are over, it is important to help the person to reintegrate into an active life.

When should I ask for further help?

Distress following trauma usually fades with time. However if you feel that you are making little progress then other help is available to aid you in overcoming your problems. Consider this in particular if your work performance or relationships are being badly affected, you feel you are no longer coping, or you have had any thoughts of harming yourself.

Where to go to for help

Some people who have been traumatised as a result of their political actions may feel reluctant to access a mainstream counsellor. Its important to know that professional counsellors are bound to respect confidentiality, except in a couple of clearly-defined circumstances, which they should outline before they commence any counselling with you. (e.g if they think you might hurt yourself). Attitudes vary so its important to get a counsellor you trust and who won't judge you.

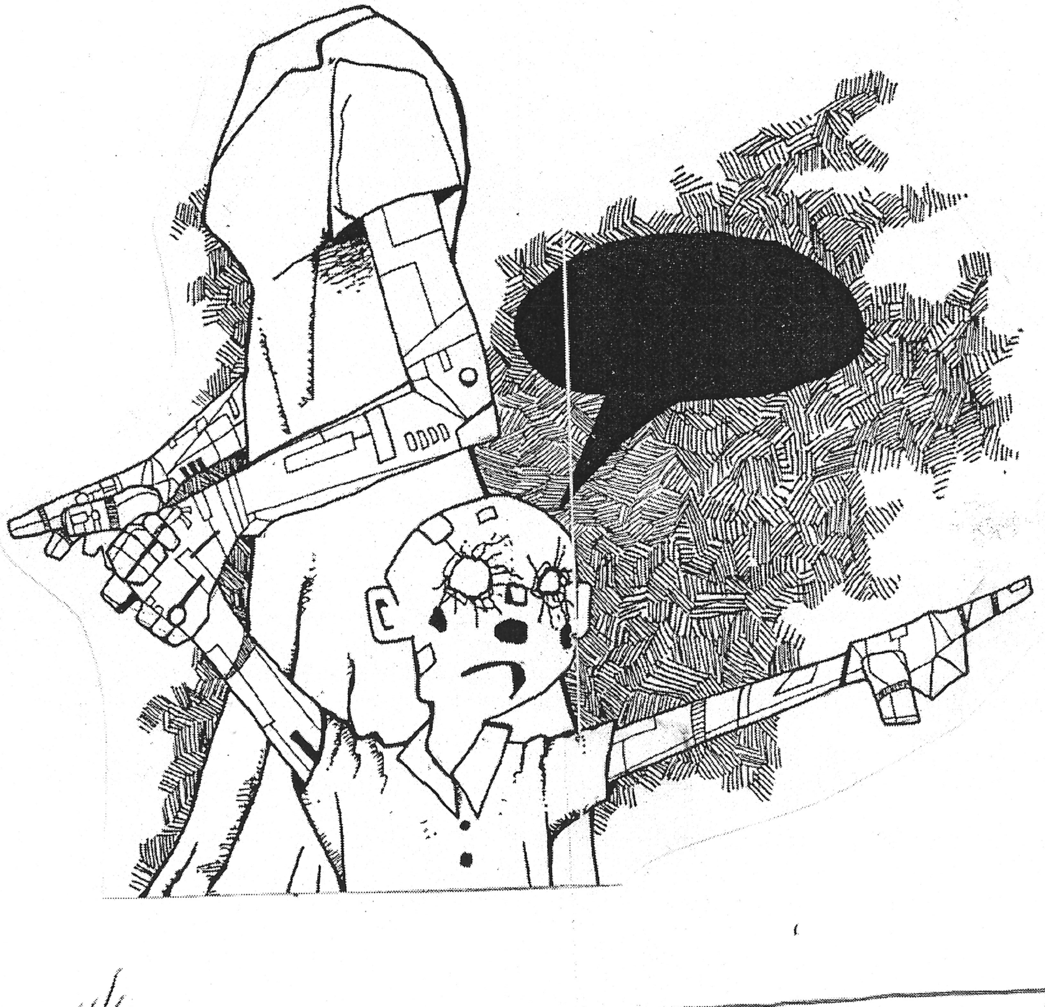
Sexual Assault Centres can be good to contact as they know counsellors who have experience in trauma.

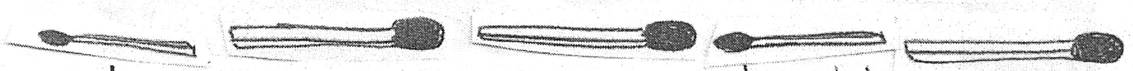
State funded counselling is available through Medicare. You may need to pay a gap fee. Ask your GP. Community Health Centres usually have counsellors. They may also be able to refer you to private counsellors.
People in the group you are involved with may have links to an activist-friendly counsellor.
Your local neighbourhood House is another place to try

Activist Trauma Support website: www.activist-trauma.net
http://healingtrauma.pscap.org

(An Australian activist trauma network is in the early stages. It will be able to access counsellors who are activists themselves or who support activism. Unfortunately at the time of writing its not well enough established to provide details, but check your local groups' websites for more details as the network grows)

Most of the info in this article was taken from Activist Trauma Support (www.activist_trauma.net)





avoiding burnout: towards sustainable activism.

"The capacity to care is the thing that gives life its deepest significance and meaning."
Pablo Casals

Every year committed activists drop out of our community because they have burnt out. To a great extent burnout is accepted as a by-product of being involved in activism. Burnout happens not only at great individual cost, but at a huge cost to the activist community – as we lose the activists, we also lose their skills and experience and the community is weakened.

Relentlessly driving ourselves and those around us is neither sustainable nor desirable. Sustainable activism means taking care of each other and taking care of ourselves so our efforts are sustainable. It also means making sure that the efforts of the movement as a whole are strategic and don' t echo the self- and other- destructive approach that threatens peoples, communities and the planet itself.

What is burnout

Burnout, also known as "compassion fatigue", is a state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It can occur when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest or motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces your efficiency and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly hopeless, powerless, cynical, and resentful. The unhappiness burnout causes can eventually threaten your sense of purpose, your health, and your relationships.

Basically, if people work too hard and don' t receive enough reward (whether that be financial, or in terms of acknowledgment or personal merit), or feel like their work is neverending and needs more energy than they have to give, then it can be difficult to keep working. If activists feel like they are losing more battles than they win, and they feel unsupported or unacknowledged, they lose motivation.

Why are activists at risk?

There has been quite a lot written about job related burn out and also a surprising amount (to me at least) written about activist burnout. There seems to be a general agreement about the dynamics of burnout among people writing from a range of perpsectives.

The reason that activists are at particular risk of burnout is a combination of the individual and the context. Think about your own motivation for getting active or ask other activists what inspired them. You will probably find answers around the themes of: a desire to change things or wanting to make a difference, combined with a sense of personal responsibility for the changes you/they hope to bring about. Often there is a deep sense of commitment to a principle or set of principles. These qualities are essential for effective activism. Unfortunately they can also increase the risk of burnout.

Those most at risk of burnout are people who spend their time coming into contact with the dark or tragic side of human experience, or in conditions that are beyond their control. In addition, the rewards of political action, if they come at all, can be intangible and far off. The lack of control an activist may feel over the situation is often compounded by other factors such as lack of finances or little or no family support.

The most conscientious people-helpers are the most vulnerable - taking the weight of the world on their shoulders and not allowing themselves to rest until the problems of the world have been solved. Time off for enjoyment means feeling guilty – how can they enjoy themselves while the ice caps are melting/women are trafficked/bombs are dropping?

The activist culture in some ways contributes to this. There is always so much to be done, never enough people to do it and in some groups, an attitude that if you're not eating, sleeping and breathing the cause, you're not doing enough.

What is the difference between stress and burnout?

Burnout may be the result of unrelenting stress, but it isn' t the same as too much stress. Stress, by and large, involves too much: too many pressures that demand too much of you physically and psychologically. Stressed people can still imagine, though, that if they can just get everything under control, they'll feel better. Burnout, on the other hand, is about not enough. Being burned out means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring. People experiencing burnout often don' t see any hope of positive change in their situations. If excessive stress is like drowning in responsibilities, burnout is being all dried up.

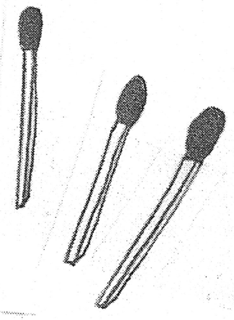
STRESS vs. BURNOUT

Stress	Burnout
Characterised by overengagement	Characterised by disengagement
Emotions are overreactive	Emotions are blunted
Produces urgency and hyperactivity	Produces helplessness and hopelessness
Exhausts physical energy	Exhausts motivation and drive, ideals and hope
Leads to anxiety disorders	Leads to paranoia, detachment, and depression
Causes disintegration	Causes demoralisation
Primary damage is physical	Primary damage is emotional
Stress may kill you prematurely, and you won't have enough time to finish what you started.	Burnout may never kill you, but your life may not seem worth living.

One other difference between stress and burnout: While you're usually aware of being under a lot of stress, you don't always notice burnout when it happens. The symptoms of burnout — the hopelessness, the cynicism, the detachment from others — can take months to surface. Once entrenched, the concern of others is often dismissed. Below is a checklist of symptoms.

Symptoms
Symptoms of burnout can be expressed physically and/or mentally. They include:

- A creeping feeling that activism is taking over your life.
- Feeling emotionally drained by contact with other people
- Feeling detached and withdrawn from other people
- Avoiding social contact
- A loss of pleasure in food, friends or other activities that were once exciting and interesting
- A general sense of running on empty.
- Decreased energy -'keeping up the speed' becomes increasingly difficult
- Irritability, overreacting to small stuff
- Frustration



- A reduced sense of reward in return for pouring so much of self into the project
- A belief you are not longer effective
- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Difficulty in making decisions
- A feeling of failure.

- A sense of helplessness and inability to see a way out of problems
- Cynicism and negativism about self, others, the work and the world generally.
- a feeling of being 'beaten'
- A loss of sense of purpose
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling trapped

What contributes to burnout?

We already know that burnout is related to stress and high workloads. There are a number of personal, organisational and cultural ingredients that make burnout more likely to happen. These include:

Activist culture

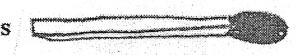
Activists are by nature motivated by a desire for change and a commitment to that purpose. The downside is that sometimes respect and kudos within the activist community is earned through a kind of devotion to the cause, which requires endless personal sacrifice. The issues to be dealt with are often pressing and urgent. This often fosters a work ethic, which in itself, can be highly damaging. While perhaps understandable, can a culture that respects personal sacrifice ultimately be either sustainable or effective?

As our community loses some of its most committed participants, cultural issues also inhibit new participants from becoming involved. Many groups are understandably wary of newcomers – the possibility of infiltration by police is a real one and the risks ever-greater in the current climate. But that wariness also creates a barrier to new ideas and fresh energy.

The Australian activist community has been described (from within) as sometimes insular, unwelcoming, unfriendly and intimidating. The strong cliques, exclusivity, the "cool" factor and a perceived narrow range of "acceptable" people, have all been identified as barriers to people becoming involved, or continuing to be involved, in activism. Personality-driven initiatives or actions can lead to a sense of some activists being more equal than others. Leaders (formal or informal) who are burning out may be fearful of taking their eye off the ball, taking a break, or delegating. This restricts the growth of the activist community and once again, increases the possibility of burnout for the existing members.

Activist culture is embedded in the wider culture and many of the issues of the mainstream continue to be played out within the activist culture. Inequities fuelled by racism, sexism and classism all threaten sustainability.

Organisational issues

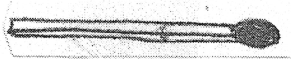


Organisational dynamics can be one of the biggest contributors to burnout. Negative organisational dynamics doesn't only mean people relating poorly. It can also mean things like unvoiced politics or unrecognised decision making structures.

While some groups within the movement attempt to use a consensus method, others maintain a hierarchy. Others, while eschewing formal hierarchies, sexism and glass ceilings, have replaced them with cliques and pecking orders. Excessive exercise of control and power, bullying, alienation of some group members are not limited to mainstream organisations. All these increase the chance of a burnt out community.

A disorganised, overcommitted organisation that doesn't take time out to pay attention to the relationships within the group or to have some fun, is a sure recipe for burnout.

Role and task issues

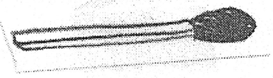


The tasks we undertake, and the roles we take on, make their own contribution to burnout. *Role overload* is simply trying to be too many things to too many people. Whether its self-imposed, something that is put upon you by others, or something that just happens due to the demands of the work, doesn't matter. In many smaller groups or organisations, people take on multiple roles. Sometimes there are just too many to manage effectively.

At the opposite end, a restrictive and confined role, especially one that is imposed on you or that you don't enjoy, is equally harmful. Boredom from doing work that never changes or doesn't challenge you, or a preoccupation with 'playing it safe' also contribute.

The intangible nature of change can leave it very difficult to know when something has been achieved. While some goals are clear, others are less well defined. The feeling of not achieving something for all the effort you put in is another contributor to burnout.

Individual factors

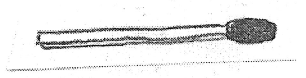


Probably the most important individual factor that contributes to burnout is a disparity between (somewhat idealistic) expectations and hard reality. Related to that is setting unrealistic goals for yourself or having them imposed upon you.

The strong personal commitment an activist feels for the work they do can also lead to a confusion of role identity with self-image. When the work isn't going well, they aren't going well. Some people take this as a signal to work even harder, trying more of the same thing and working longer and longer hours for less and less return. The pressure to succeed can be enormous and we can carry guilt for being human.

Guilt. For not devoting yourself to the cause enough, for letting the team down, for wanting a quiet time, or time off, for not living up to your own ideals and a vision of yourself as a perfect, always together, never selfish, angry …blah…blah…blah…human being. Guilt for standing up for yourself when it gets too much, or when other people are out of line.

This bears a close relationship to our personal relationship to power. Non-hierarchical, inclusive, flexible and



empowering structures, processes and ways of being can be difficult to enact every time in the real world. Our actions might not match our ideals and it can be difficult to walk the talk. Earnestness can also be inflexibility and easy-goingness a mask for unassertiveness or self-directed rage. Or decisive action, authoritarianism. It's a tricky soup.

There are also a whole bunch of taken-for-granted skills that are important. Their absence can lead to burnout. Time management, the ability to manage disruptions and poor planning skills all contribute.

Last, but certainly not least, is the personal cost of being arrested, losing your job, being threatened with the sack, or not having a job, being a victim of violence by a particular person or persons (police, security etc) and being further victimised knowing that the violence is *at least* sanctioned by the State, which is meant to protect us.

Can burnout be prevented or treated?

You can find a lot of information about reducing the risk of burnout on the web. A lot of it emphasises personal skills. Re-evaluating our approach to our own mental, emotional and physical health can play a large part in enabling our activism to become more sustainable and help us to avoid burning out.

Personal skills are vitally important, but a community-wide, sustainable approach to change also means looking at organisational structures and dynamics and encouraging cultural change. The most effective way of transforming our society and so halting it's destruction of the Earth, is through transforming ourselves and the way we interact with each other.

Some ideas to start with:

Cultural

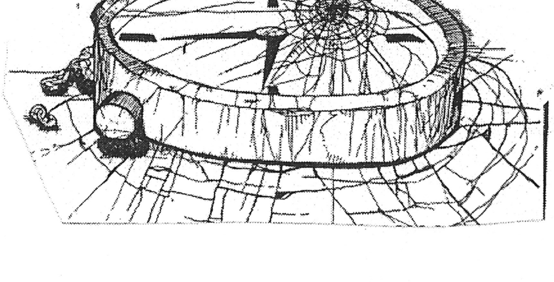
- Begin a dialogue about sustainable activism
- Be aware of, talk about and challenge unsustainable work patterns
- Be aware of, talk about and challenge instances of racism, misogyny, or gynopia
- Be aware of, talk about and challenge instances of elitism
- Be aware of, talk about and encourage a sustainable approach to activism
- Make a personal contribution to an inclusive culture.
- Establish a culture of buddying or mentoring. Buddy or mentor someone yourself.
- Celebrate examples of sustainable activism

Organisational

- Replace machismo and competition with co-operation and inclusiveness
- Ensure that group members don't fall into stereotyped roles - with women often ending up doing the cooking, clearing and washing up. This is NOT to say that these are unimportant, only that they must be shared by ALL. Challenge out-dated gender stereotypes!
- Make sure that consensus decisions are truly that – not just that some group members are ground down by others' unrelenting need to push their point. Make sure the women are not interrupted, talked over, or ignored by the men. Make sure less articulate or educated people are not interrupted, talked over, or ignored by those more confident. Make sure people who are other than "white middle class" are not interrupted, talked over, or ignored.
- Develop strategic planning skills and make a strategic plan. That means taking a long term, goal oriented approach and working out the best steps to take to meet that goal. Break the long-term tasks into smaller, more achievable ones.
- Build in celebrations – small achievements, anniversaries, special days
- Think broadly about what constitutes a success. More change has come from campaigns that have included direct action than from lobbying alone. That makes every action a success just because it happened.
- Develop good group structures and processes.
- Provide training for group members. Task-related, process related, people related.
- Encourage group members to think of solutions to problems or issues, especially group dynamics issues, rather than whinging about them.
- Individually recognise individual members' contributions
- Ensure that group practices encourage diversity and are inclusive
- Take an audit of roles in the group and who does what when.
- Take time out just to HAVE FUN
- Announce yourselves as an anti-burnout group

Task

- Do work that is transformed into creative play
- Ensure that you take regular breaks – from meal breaks to holidays
- Clarify your job description

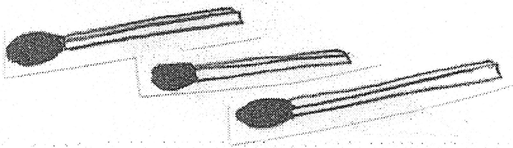


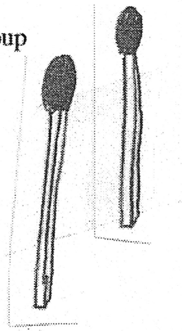
- Organise your time so you can concentrate on vital tasks.
- Change your duties
- Diversify responsibilities, put more variety into your activism and your outside life.
- Try to change little things that gnaw at you and accommodate to those you can't change.
- Distinguish between stressful aspects that you can change, and those you can't change. Develop strategies
- Alternate major tasks in which results won't be seen for a while with those that will have immediate, productive and gratifying results.
- Utilise your specific personal talents, while trying to emphasise those work activities that on their own are enjoyable and accomplishable and that you feel you are doing a good job at
- Do less but do it better – prioritise your interests and activities

Social

Poor relationships and isolation can contribute to burnout, but positive relationships can help prevent or reduce its onset.

- Build a support system for yourself with those who can discuss your problems and help look for solutions.
- Confide in others
- Develop casual social relationships with the people in your group.. "We do all kinds of things, whether it is getting together to play cards or going out to eat. It gives everyone an opportunity to relax and blow off steam," Just remember to avoid hanging out with negative-minded people who do nothing but complain.
- Connect with a group that is personally meaningful to you. If you don't feel liked and valued by other group members, change groups.
- Develop and maintain healthy, friendly, and meaningful relationships with fellow activists
- Have a support group (activists and nonactivists) to which you can talk and release your feelings
- Join a different group





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Personal

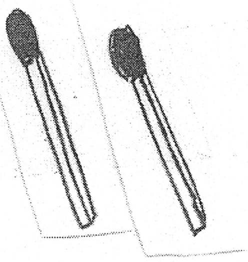
- Play, laugh, dance, sing
- Develop a spiritual practice
- Build or maintain a foundation of good physical health, so be sure to eat right, get enough sleep, and make exercise part of your daily routine.
- Acknowledge your own humanity: you have the right to pleasure and a right to relaxation.
- Learn to really connect with the Earth by observing and understanding Nature's cycles and patterns (rather than just clattering about scaring all the animals). See Starhawk's 'The Earth Path' for more info.
- Develop an awareness that it is not possible to control everything in one's work and life environment - while viewing some stressful situations as challenges to be overcome
- Become aware of and tuned into the effects of activist work (finding a balance between the often undue optimism of the political right and pessimism of the political left):
- Be as disciplined about self care as you are about your activism
- Aim for a balance that is right for you and your needs.
- Remember that what you are doing is right --no matter the outcome- and celebrating the victories that do come, while rewarding yourself for the work you are doing
- Educate yourself. The more you know, the more effective you'll be, and the better you'll feel about your efforts.
- Take an audit - what are the situations that grind you down the most? Can you create ways of dealing with them?
- Burnout involves feelings that fester and grow, so be sure to let your emotions out in healthy, productive ways
- Maintain personal growth both at home and on the job.
- Encourage and practice healthy communication.
- Find your own ``decompression techniques" such as activities like meditation or exercise that relieve tension and put you into a more relaxed state.
- Regularly review and prune your commitments to prevent overload.
- Learn and practise the art of letting go - face up to, accept and work through your pain, your stress, your fears, while being compassionate with yourself, until you come to the point where you can let go and move on from them.
- Accept and tolerate the contradictions in your and others' beliefs and actions. Or remove them.
- Develop interests and skills in life outside the political arena; taking time to do those things that rejuvenate the self
- Learn some simple breathing exercises
- Live one day at a time, but realising that working for peace/justice is a lifetime job
- Explore your creativity - it's often said what a creative group of people activists are. How about experimenting with your creativity in areas that don't involve outwitting the police, or foiling corporate shenanigans?

End bit

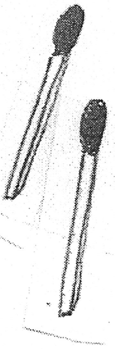
If we want to transform society at large, then we must first transform ourselves. As individuals we can responsibility to make changes to our attitudes and our habits. We can be the example of wider change we would like to see. We can also work with others to encourage a more sustainable approach. Understanding that burnout is a real concern and not something to be ashamed of is part of the paradigm shift we are working towards.

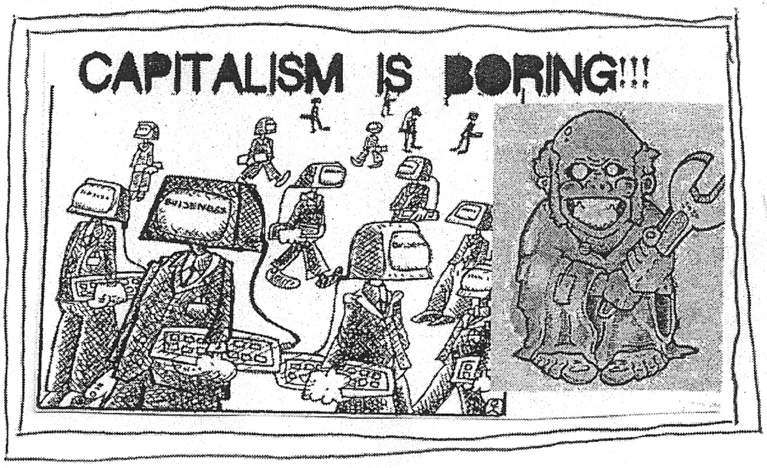
Most of the ideas in this piece have been inspired, sourced or shamelessly plagarised from the following places:

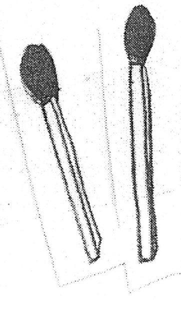
www.helpguide.org
www.activist_trauma.net
http://www.coping.org
www.thechangeagency.org



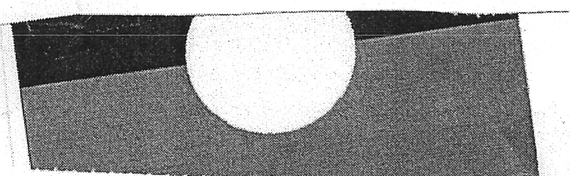
These sites contain lots more on burnout, stress and trauma. They're worth taking a look at.







voices of resistance- Northern Territory traditional owners speaking out.



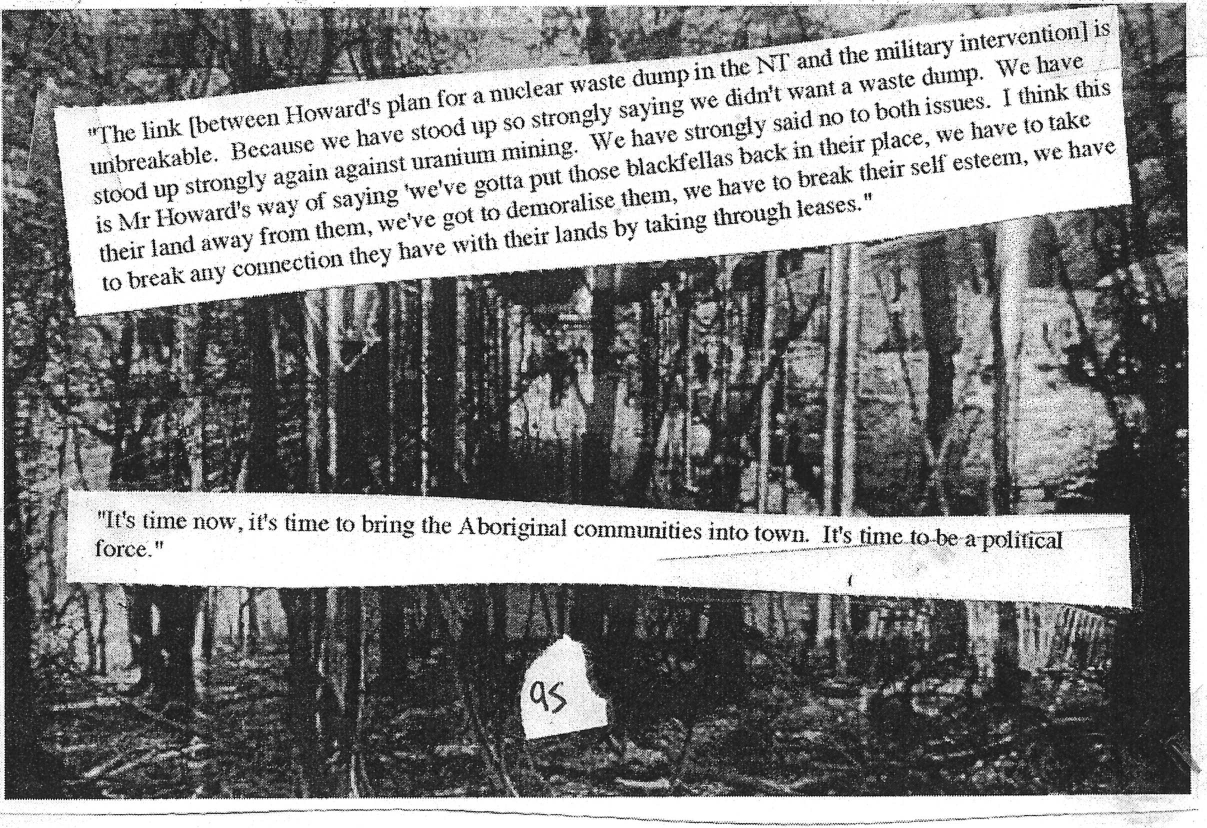
I arrived in the country of Mutitjulu Traditional Owners a day before the military arrived. Days later, as a white person in Alice Springs, you could blink and miss the invasion by military, territory and federal cops, bureaucrats, and media happening in scores of communities. The locals kept working, the tourists kept shopping, and we kept drinking coffee. But when I started to talk to mob on the street, local Arrente activists, our friends, or any of the 30% of Alice Springs population that are Aboriginal, I found anger, incredible fear, isolation, resistance, and deep sadness.

It seemed, in most communities, the take-over process was not a community meeting and army playing football in the streets with black kids, as the Government and corporate media have kept painting. People in Town Camps in Alice Springs told me of 4am and dawn raids, use of capsicum spray, invasive media, Federal Police regularly entering the camps without warrants or permits, raiding homes, and taking photos of all adults and children in the camps.

I started talking to, and recording, Aboriginal peoples between Alice Springs and Darwin, and trying to share some views, responses, resistance and ideas for what we've gotta do.

Mitch, an Eastern Arrernte and Luritja woman, from the Engawala community (Harts Range, east of Alice Springs).
"By taking away the 90 leases he's talking about, once again, [Howard] is dictating to us what is gonna happen on Aboriginal land... Taking away land doesn't fix any problems, as we've known since colonisation. The problems are always there, the racism is always there, and having white people tell you what to do once again is just repeating history."

"By taking control of our land, he is taking control of our heart and spirit, and I think he really knows that. [Howard]'s planned to make sure people get sick, he's planned feel dispossessed and unwanted and uncared for. After 219 years of feeling that way, do we grow up another generation to fight for Aboriginal issues in Australia? Yes, we have to, because [Howard] is forcing us into that position.



"The link [between Howard's plan for a nuclear waste dump in the NT and the military intervention] is unbreakable. Because we have stood up so strongly saying we didn't want a waste dump. We have stood up strongly again against uranium mining. We have strongly said no to both issues. I think this is Mr Howard's way of saying 'we've gotta put those blackfellas back in their place, we have to take their land away from them, we've got to demoralise them, we have to break their self esteem, we have to break any connection they have with their lands by taking through leases."

"It's time now, it's time to bring the Aboriginal communities into town. It's time to be a political force."

In Alice Springs, hundreds of people attended the rally to mark the beginning of the fiftieth anniversary of the National Aboriginal Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC). Lhere Arthepe Native Title Holders chief executive officer **Kenny Laughton** told the crowd the plan is a grab for land:
"It's about taking away more rights and making more rules so Government can keep us under control more, and keep us poor...That's the name of the game. We're to remain the third-class citizens for ever in white Australia rule under John Howard."

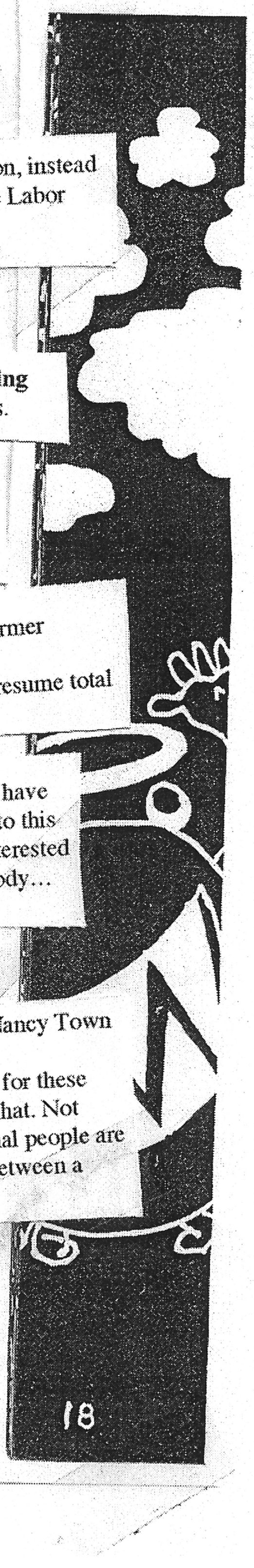
Owen Cole from the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA):
"The mean-spirited Prime Minister does not care if Aboriginals, Muslims and Asians are demonised and ostracised as long as he can win the next election. I've got a message for you John Howard and Mal Brough: don't think that minority groups will forget what you have done to us come election time.

"Little Johnny, we all know that this intervention is part of an insidious plan to strip apart the hard-fought rights of Australia's Indigenous people. Demonising every Aboriginal, painting the picture of most of us as child sexual abusers is of little concern to you. Australian media seems to be jumping on the bandwagon without an iota of critical evaluation of the intervention.

"We call upon [Opposition Leader Kevin] Rudd and the Labor Party to show some gumption, instead of being led by the ears by Johnny Howard... Are Aboriginal people now dispensable to the Labor Party now it's fashionable to bash blacks?

"The time has come for us to fight back: otherwise there won't be no looking forward, looking black; instead I think we'll be in the middle of a railway track, and the train will run right over us.

"The five year leases will become fifty years, then a hundred years, then perpetual leases. Ultimately all our hard fought land rights will be taken away in the name of national interest."

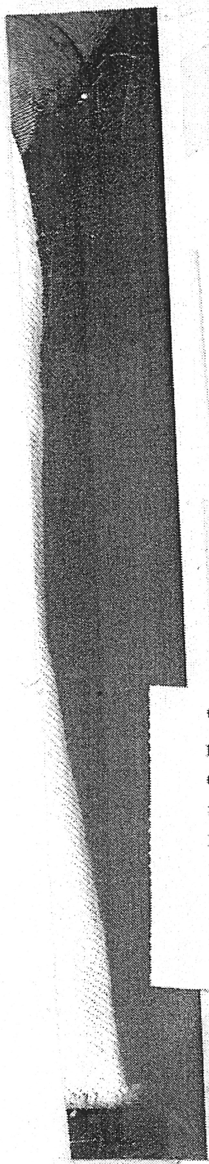


Pat Turner, Arrente and Gurdanji woman, Head of National Indigenous Television and former administrator of ATSIC:
"Be under no illusions: the Government is using child sexual abuse as the Trojan horse to resume total control of our lands.

"We have known about the issues in our communities for several generations and governments have done nothing... We know what the situation is like, we live it every day... We have to stand up to this Government and we have to say "if you want to do anything to us, you negotiate. We're not interested in consultation, you negotiate. We have rights and we are not about to sacrifice them for anybody...

"We have, on Aboriginal land, inalienable freehold title. And we will keep it."

Barbara Shaw, Tangentyere Council, community and health worker, and resident at Mt Nancy Town Camp in Alice Springs:
"I'm proud to be a town camper. All my great grandfathers and grandmothers they fought for these town camps for years and years and years. And we're gonna hold onto them, not matter what. Not matter what colour you are, where you come from, and where you live; today all Aboriginal people are being painted by the same brush, with one colour. Aboriginal people are being jammed between a solid wall and a hard rock....



"In regards to welfare reform, Aboriginal women have had these programs already running out of their resource centres, for their children and their families. These programs worked for our communities. It made women stronger and gave them control in their communities... So let's put the lid back on the paint tin and toss it. Climb the wall in support of one another and smash the hard rock with a big bang. This big fight and struggle is not going to stop here, because it's going to carry on in the generations to come. Let's take a stand in solidarity today."

In Darwin, over 2000 people marched at the demonstration marking the end of NAIDOC week. Senior Traditional Owner of Larrakia Nation, NAIDOC patron and Senior Territorian of the Year Aunty **Kathy Mills:**

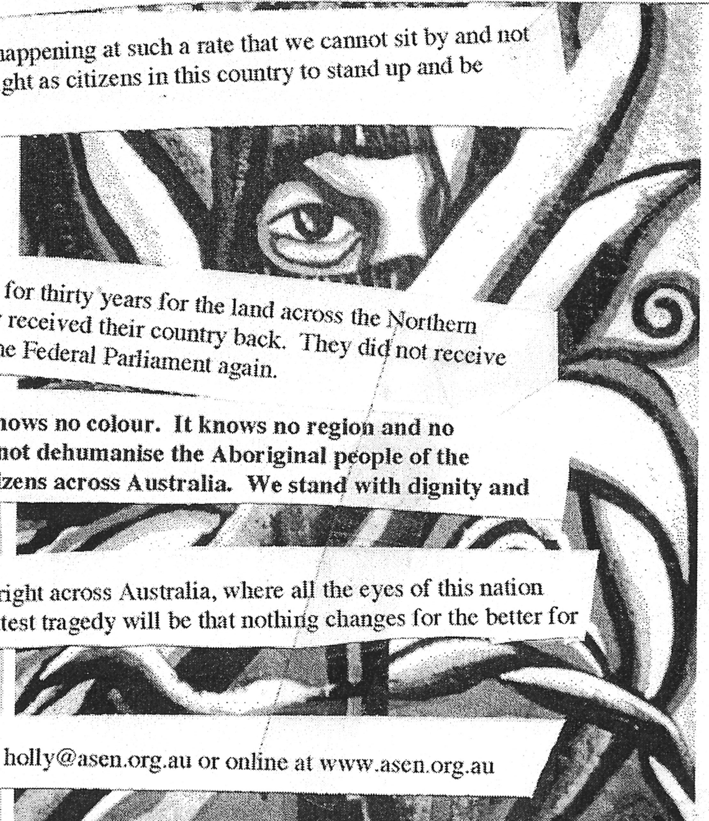
"Our status of traditional ownership is under attack, like never before. The recent emotive action by the Prime Minister to declare martial law in the Northern Territory, using the Wild/Anderson report, is simply a smokescreen for his mischievous plan. The report was intended to improve living conditions for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people continue to suffer under starving wages, crowded living conditions, high cost of living, isolation from major health and services supply outlets, and inadequate travel service provisions. You name it, in 100% of unemployment in communities, and the jobs that are available are taken by people with qualifications. Aboriginal people are the industry: when do we stop being the industry? When do we become part of the industry?

"This is not about the social welfare of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, this is about getting rid of land rights.

"What the Prime Minister and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs should be doing is funding a national-wide program for law reform for Australia, including Aboriginal customary law, and a covenant compliant with the international law on indigenous rights. If they wanna spend their money, spend it properly! Short term measures and quick fix exercises have not worked in the past, they will not work now, or in the future. I call on the Prime Minister and his Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to reconsider his course for military intervention. **This exercise under the guise of keeping the peace is an act of war!** War on people who are defenceless, who offer no resistance or threat to Australia, no intent to wage war, and no weapons of destruction. **Their sole attribute which is controversial is their outright ownership of Australia through their indigenous rights."**

Yanyuwa activist and Member for Arnhem (NT Govt) **Barbara McCarthy:**
"This is the biggest political change that is happening right now in the Northern Territory. We don't have to wait for it, it is already around us, we are right in the midst of it.

"What is happening in the Northern Territory is happening at such a rate that we cannot sit by and not ask questions, and not insist on our democratic right as citizens in this country to stand up and be heard.



"Do not be afraid. Stand Strong. We have fought for thirty years for the land across the Northern Territory. There are people who only just recently received their country back. They did not receive their country back to se it dissolved by an Act of the Federal Parliament again.

"Of course we care for our children... Abuse knows no colour. It knows no region and no boundaries. Prime Minister, Mal Brough: Do not dehumanise the Aboriginal people of the Territory. Do not isolate us from our fellow citizens across Australia. We stand with dignity and with strength."

"The greatest tragedy after all this input from right across Australia, where all the eyes of this nation have been focused on our homelands, the greatest tragedy will be that nothing changes for the better for our people. Stay strong."

Recordings of the speeches are available from holly@asen.org.au or online at www.asen.org.au

West Papua

George Monbiot recounts an act of torture by Indonesian forces in West Papua. He says that, partially because readers are spared the gruesome details of torture, the agonies of those suffering under Indonesian cruelty are not. He writes:

> *In West Papua... I met a man I shall call Tom. At the age of twelve he had watched as his uncle became an experiment in agony. The operation took twelve hours. Early in the morning, Tom's uncle had reported to the local army headquarters to ask permission, as required, to go hunting. He had a large, bushy beard, and this, the soldiers decided, identified him as a rebel. They took him into the kitchen and started questioning him. Tom hid in the bushes by the window, and saw everything.*
>
> *His uncle denied that he had done anything wrong. The men produced the simple equipment that all soldiers in Indonesia's annexed lands carry: cut-throat razors. They sliced off his ears. They held them in the kitchen fire with tongs, cooked them, then forced him to eat them. Then, very slowly, they opened up his cheeks, so that the flesh hung off the bone. They began to strip the muscles from his arms and legs. Beneath the laughter of the soldiers, Tom could hear the blood running through the kitchen floorboards. An iron bar was heated until it was red hot, then pressed into his thighs. The soldiers mixed up a pan of chilli and salt, and rubbed it into his wounds. By nightfall, Tom's uncle had been scalped and largely flayed, but he was still alive. The soldiers stuffed him into a rice sack, dragged him a mile over the rocky ground, then dumped him in a hole. Tom could still hear his uncle's cries, but by the time he had fetched his relatives to pull him out, the man was dead.*
>
> *This was no aberration, but, in the Indonesian army, the respectable norm. The commander of West Papua's pacification programme, Colonel Sarwo-Edhie, used to recount over dinner his means of prolonging people's deaths, while chopping them up with a knife. When he retired from the army, he ran a university department teaching the principles of government.*[1]

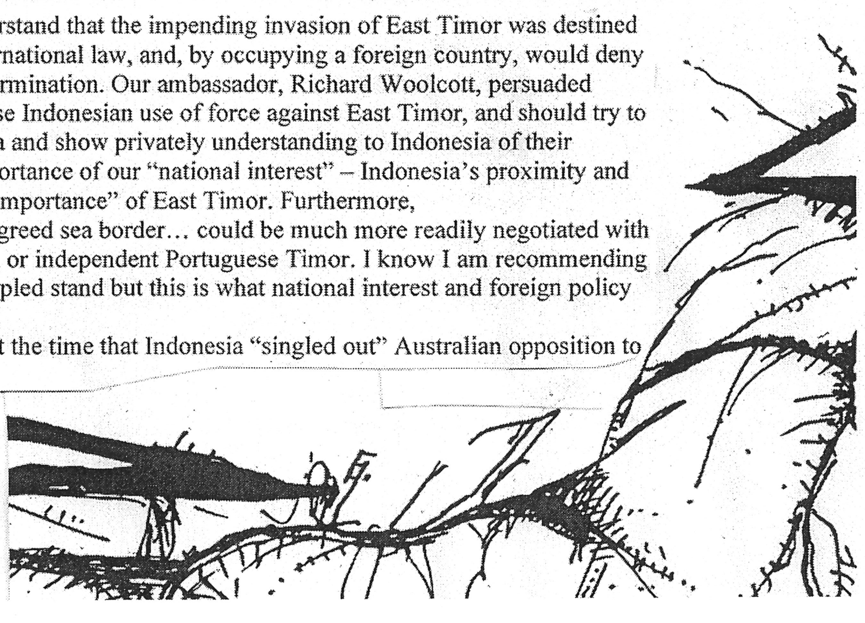
In 1974, Indonesia made it plain that it was planning on invading East Timor – a plan that Australia was aware of by November.[2] One of Australia's most progressive Prime Ministers, Gough Whitlam, immediately sought to placate Indonesia, informing vicious dictator Suharto that East Timor was an "unviable" state, and thus, should become part of Indonesia.[3]

A brief digression on what was obviously going to happen after the invasion should be noted. Suharto swept to power in Indonesia by massacring perhaps half a million communists and communist sympathisers. Or, as a delighted Prime Minister Howard Holt said, "With 500,000 to 1 million Communist sympathisers knocked off, I think it is safe to assume a reorientation has taken place."[4] This euphorically received event was described by a CIA analyst as "one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murders during the Second World War, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950s".[5] The killing of mere communists was thought unimportant, if not outright desirable, and in 1973, Whitlam described the progress Indonesia had made under Suharto's guidance to peace, justice, harmony and democracy.[6]

With this context in mind, one can understand that the impending invasion of East Timor was destined to be brutal, in flagrant violation of international law, and, by occupying a foreign country, would deny the East Timorese their right to self determination. Our ambassador, Richard Woolcott, persuaded Whitlam that Australia should not oppose Indonesian use of force against East Timor, and should try to "minimise the public impact in Australia and show privately understanding to Indonesia of their problems". This was because of the importance of our "national interest" – Indonesia's proximity and importance outweighed the "relative unimportance" of East Timor. Furthermore,

> closing the present gap in the agreed sea border... could be much more readily negotiated with Indonesia... than with Portugal or independent Portuguese Timor. I know I am recommending a pragmatic rather than a principled stand but this is what national interest and foreign policy is all about.[7]

It should be noted that Woolcott knew at the time that Indonesia "singled out" Australian opposition to the invasion as its "main problem".[8]



Australia thus knew that it could prevent the invasion of East Timor. It could choose to allow this to happen, it could choose to support this, or it could choose to prevent it – an option that Woolcott clearly considered possible. Woolcott, of course, dismissed preventing the invasion by a man the CIA compared to Mao, Stalin and Hitler, because, after all, East Timor was comparatively unimportant.

Australia chose to give support to Indonesia's Stalin/Mao/Hitler, both diplomatically and militarily. This was after all crucial – as Woolcott noted, we were the "main problem" Indonesia might face in its invasion of East Timor. Thus, Australia which had increased military aid fourfold to Indonesia from 1972-4,[9] nearly doubled it from 1975-1981.[10] At this point, we should pause to note that this is analogous to supporting the Nazis, because Jews were comparatively unimportant when compared to the importance of good relations with Germany. However, besides supporting the military, which was already firmly established as belonging in the ranks of the cruellest butchers of the 20th century, Australia offered as much diplomatic support as possible. The Indonesian foreign minister quite accurately said that "secretly both the US and Australia were applauding what Indonesia did, publicly they were outraged".[11] Clinton Fernandes concurred, saying that Australia decided on the pragmatic course of not doing anything to prevent the invasion, but publicly disassociating themselves from it.[12] However, as Dunn notes,

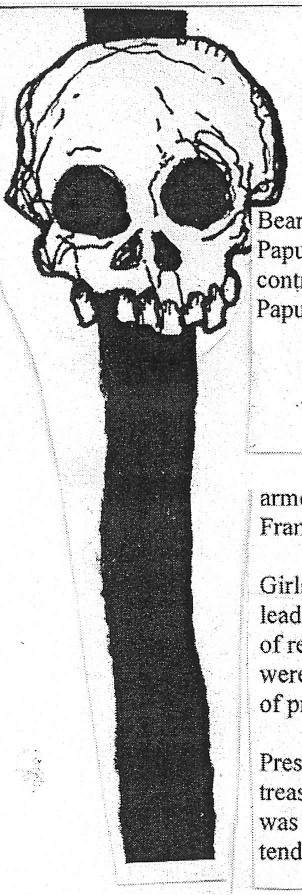
> From 1978 onwards, the Australian government openly condoned the Indonesian invasion, and even began to assume the role of an accomplice by rallying to Indonesia's defence in the Parliament, and in international forums.[13]

Furthermore, Prime Minister Fraser led Australia to becoming the only country in the world recognising Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. Chomsky, Shalom and Albert noted in 1999 that no other country legally recognised Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.[14]

Our support for Indonesia during its invasion and occupation of East Timor can be compared with some of the results. The Indonesian foreign minister Malik admitted in March 1977 that 50-80 000 East Timorese[15] – out of a population of 650 000 – had been massacred.[16] Perhaps 200 000 died because of the Indonesian occupation.[17] Fernandes wrote that Fraser, realising public opinion in Australia would not support the genocide in East Timor, "did its best to prevent emergence of public knowledge of Australia's role in the matter". Thus, the *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* were prevented from running stories on East Timor.[18] Systematic massacres, rapes, enforced stavation, harsh repression and so on, could have been prevented by Whitlam. Fraser could have chosen not to support the genocide in Indonesia, but he chose to do so anyway – because, after all, East Timorese don't matter, when compared with our "national interest" and the importance of Indonesia.

Australian support for the brutal occupation of East Timor basically continued until after the referendum in 1999 for East Timor's independence. After there was an explosion in violence by the Indonesian military, which sought to reverse the unsurprising overwhelming vote for independence for East Timor, Alexander Downer was still proclaiming that the Indonesian military should be trusted to looking after the security of East Timor, which had been jeopardised by "fairly wild elements" within the Indonesian military. After a massive public outcry, Australia reversed its longstanding position on East Timor and Indonesian barbarities, and decided to call on America to support the East Timorese. America, presumably determining a course of action in the sort of way Woolcott had in 1975, decided that Australia was a "very big dog", and thus chose to support us, and consequently East Timor. Within hours of an ultimatum by the American government, Indonesia decided that it would, after all, allow a peacekeeping force in.[19] The peacekeepers rescued East Timor from what would certainly have been an appalling bloodbath, as it should be noted that by the time they arrived, perhaps 250 000 East Timorese were displaced by Indonesian "security" forces.[20]

The significance of Australia's shameful betrayal of the people of East Timor should be noted, in several crucial aspects. Firstly, the ease with which we could have ended the genocide at any time, as Woolcott knew when he chose to allow the invasion. Indonesia described Australia as its biggest obstacle, and that is what we could have been, if we had chosen to do so. What should also be noted is that Indonesia basically follows orders from America,[21] and America considers supporting Australia more important than its relationship with Indonesia.[22] It should further be noted that even the more progressive Australian Prime Ministers – Whitlam and Fraser – regarded invasion and genocide by a well established mass murderer – as not sufficiently undesirable to cause it to end, as compared with corporate profits and what is called the "national interest". What did cause an end to suffering, as the Indonesians feared since the 1970s, was massive Australian outcry from the *public*, which does value human rights. That is why the Indonesian government colluded with the Australian government to prevent press coverage of Indonesian atrocities, and that is why East Timor was finally liberated from the cruelty of Indonesia.



Bear in mind these lessons when we consider the current situation in West Papua. West Papua was essentially transferred, under the auspices of the United Nations, to Indonesian control by 1963, with a referendum pending as to whether Indonesia should retain control of West Papua. George Monbiot describes what happened next quite eloquently:

> The Indonesian army wasted no time in demonstrating the benefits of integration. The Papuans trained for political life were rounded up and kicked to death. Tribal villages were strafed and napalmed from the air, then machine-gunned from the ground. Detainees were electrocuted and had nails hammered through their feet. As Papuan men took to the forests armed only with spears and poisoned arrows, the Indonesian army, equipped by Britain, France and the US, began a full-scale pacification programme.
>
> Girls were raped then killed with a bayonet in the vagina or a stick up the rectum. Tribal leaders were taken up in helicopters and dropped, alive, into their villages. The slightest spark of resistance would trigger off punishment bombings. As vast mineral and timber concessions were handed to British and American companies, the global superpowers raised not a squeak of protest…
>
> President Suharto announced that anyone who voted against integration would be guilty of treason. In 1969, 1025 men selected by the army were lined up at gunpoint, and the population was recorded as having unanimously chosen Indonesian rule. The UN left the Papuans to the tender mercies of one of the most violent governments on earth.[23]

Indonesia's first governor to the province estimated that, from 1963-69, 30 000 West Papuans were slaughtered, and an estimated 100 000 have been killed overall by Indonesian forces.[24] Reports of horrendous human rights violations have continued right up to the present, with a Yale study suggesting that Indonesian atrocities may constitute genocide.[25] Human rights abuses by Indonesia in East Timor have been clearly documented – and in some cases, some of the same individual perpetrators of atrocities have moved to West Papua.[26]

Australia, of course, in its continued compassion for human rights, supports the Indonesian military, and even trains Kopassus special forces – who are particularly notorious for human rights violations.[27]

These facts basically go undisputed, although the unpleasant ones about atrocities, and our training of the terrorist, if not genocidal forces, go unmentioned.

Thus, you can read conservative commentator Gerard Henderson saying "The plebiscite was inadequate by any standard. Yet by the time it was conducted in 1969 the matter had been effectively resolved", but objecting to the Greens support for West Papuan independence – because it may "lead to even harsher rule in Papua"[28] – he tacitly admitted that Indonesian repression involves severe human rights violations. Greg Sheridan basically writes the same thing – the 1969 Act of Free Choice was a "sham", he tacitly admits that the Indonesian police and military have behaved badly – and even says they should "behave much better" – but supporting the right of the West Papuans to self determination will "only be encouraging people to get themselves killed" – which was essentially repeated in a second column.[29] The unpleasant question of what will happen to those in West Papua who are not willing to submit meekly to the harsh repression of Indonesia goes unanswered, and Sheridan spares the reader details of what the exact flaws of Indonesian rule has entailed – such as, for the raped women, massacred civilians, and terrorised population. Fortunately for us both, we do not have to live under that sort of regime. Sheridan's solution to the problem of appalling repression is for the West Papuans to do what they're told, and for Australians to encourage this obedience – a stance indistinguishable from that one might expect from him if he supported Indonesia's human rights violations.

[redacted]

It should be noted again that when Indonesia invaded East Timor, we were potentially the main obstacle to their appalling atrocities. An aroused public could end the harsh repression in West Papua, and could certainly end our cooperation in the crimes against the people of West Papua. However, as in the case of East Timor, the West Papuans are simply too unimportant for us to worry about such mere details as their human rights – including their right to self determination, criminally and flagrantly abrogated in the 1969 Act of No Choice, as West Papuans reputedly call it. Woolcott, who has decided to devote his career to supporting and apologising for the slaughter of foreigners, wrote an article repeating in essence his notorious telegram of 1975. He calls for a "realistic" approach to our dealings with Indonesia. He suggests that plenty of nations are denied their right to self determination – it thought to follow from this that one should not support self determination. He described as "foolish" the position that our relationship with Indonesia would not jeopardise our interests too severely:

> Australia's main sea lanes and air routes pass through or over Indonesia. Moreover, Indonesian support for Australia's regional interests are vital to us. Just two recent examples are Indonesia's support for the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum – an Australian initiative – and its support for our attendance at the first East Asian Economic Summit in Kuala Lumpur last December. Neither would have happened without Indonesian advocacy for our interests.[30]

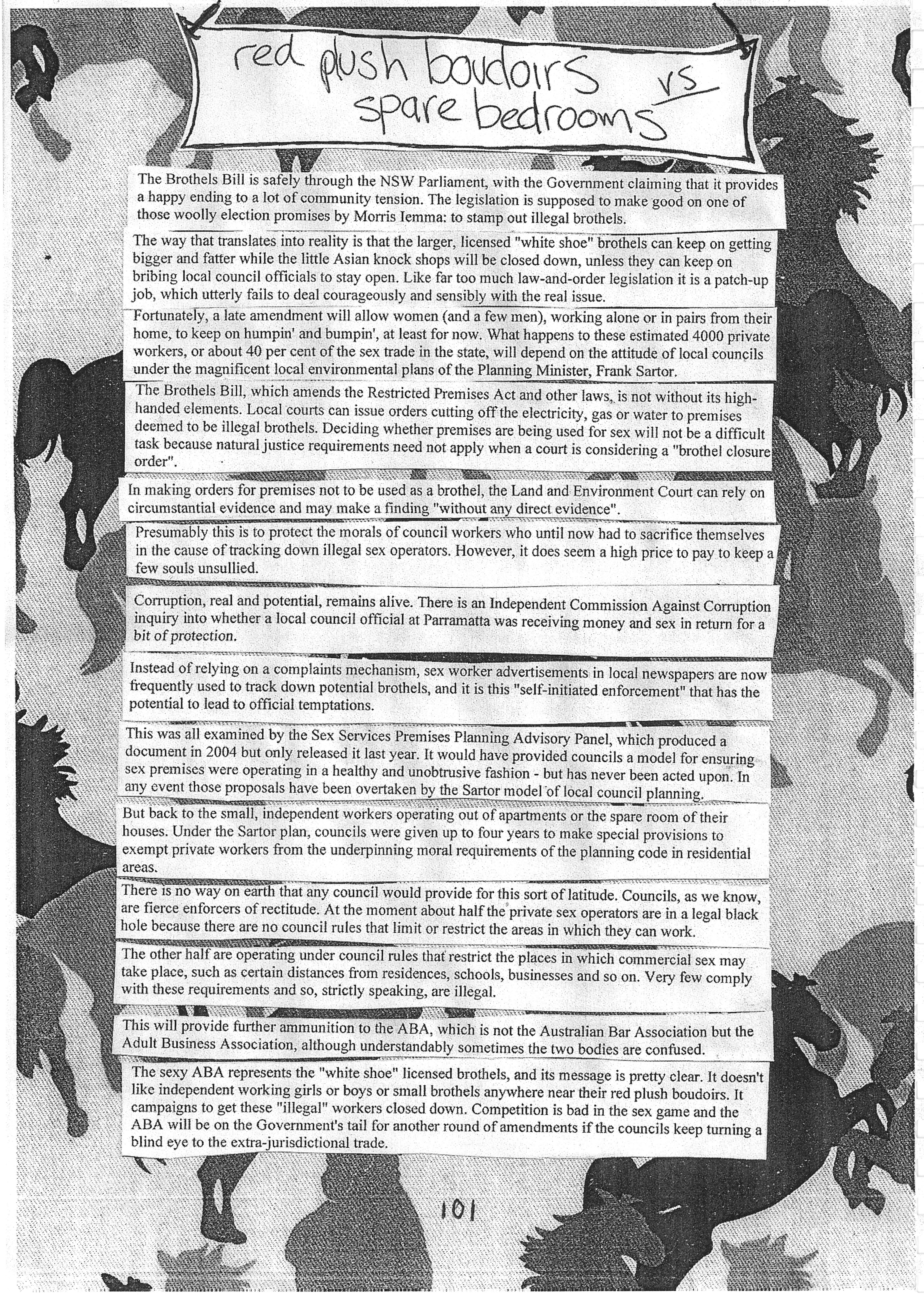
For these reasons, we are supposed to sacrifice the West Papuan's right to freedom of opinion, if we are to grant the assumption of conservative columnists that only when West Papuans support independence will they face abhorrent cruelty by the Indonesian forces. Woolcott says "we cannot allow our relations with Indonesia to be held hostage to a relatively small number of asylum-seekers from Papua".[31] That depends on whether Indonesia will decide to severe relations with Australia over West Papua.

Australia could end the suffering of the West Papuans, or at least, stop supporting it. Australia, at the very least, could provide refuge to those who escape the horror of Indonesian cruelty. Australia was good enough to take in a small group of West Papuan refugees – perhaps its only act towards "unlawful non-citizens" in decades of which I could feel proud. By taking in 42 West Papuans, Australia tacitly admitted that Indonesian repression and cruelty was real. In response to Indonesian condemnation, Australia has decided to prevent future West Papuans from gaining refuge here. It has declared its support for Indonesian sovereignty over West Papua – although, as noted above, any rational person knows the basic facts of the stolen plebiscite, and the brutal repression of the West Papuan people. Meanwhile, the West Papuans live in an area rich in resources, but remain in desperate poverty, as the profits flow to multinational corporations and Indonesia instead.[32]

This is not to say West Papua should become independent of Indonesia. The simple fact is that those of us who support human rights, should support the rights of the West Papuans. The West Papuans have a right to be free from the brutal rule of Indonesia, which we could, at the least, fight to make less brutal, simply by withdrawing support and calling on America to do the same. As in East Timor, this will rely on us, the public, who care about human rights in a non-racist manner, and thus, care about the rights of West Papuans as much as our so called "national interest". My opinion on West Papuan independence is unimportant and irrelevant. It is not my choice to make, and I have no right to it, any more than Howard or Downer do. The West Papuans should decide if they want to remain under Indonesian sovereignty. The West Papuans have never been allowed their legitimate right to self-determination.

There are some people who do not believe in equality of human rights. Some believe in the racist notion of "national interest", whereby "our" rights are more important than the rights of others, who we can disregard. Typically, "our" is supposed to mean the country we belong to, although clearly terrorist atrocities in West Papua are less abhorrent to our elected politicians than terrorist atrocities in, for example, England, Spain or America. We could only worry about "our" human rights, and not worry about the West Papuans – leaving them to the cruelty of Indonesia. This wouldn't be inconsistent with typical Australian foreign policy. Our commitment, at least rhetorically, is quite different – John Howard wrote that "*we must stand firm against the terrorists* and insurgents *intent on crushing the spirit of democracy* in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan".[33] Why not stand firm against the terrorists intent on crushing the spirit of democracy in West Papua?

The mildest commitments would make a tremendous difference to these long suffering people. Firstly, we would have to withdraw support for the terrorists. We would then call for a United Nations peacekeeping force to enter West Papua, and also to collect facts and investigate alleged human rights violations, and if they are as serious as they are claimed to be. The United Nations peacekeeping force would be accompanied by observers for the long delayed referendum, to allow the West Papuans to determine fairly and finally whether West Papua should become independent.



red plush boudoirs vs spare bedrooms

The Brothels Bill is safely through the NSW Parliament, with the Government claiming that it provides a happy ending to a lot of community tension. The legislation is supposed to make good on one of those woolly election promises by Morris Iemma: to stamp out illegal brothels.

The way that translates into reality is that the larger, licensed "white shoe" brothels can keep on getting bigger and fatter while the little Asian knock shops will be closed down, unless they can keep on bribing local council officials to stay open. Like far too much law-and-order legislation it is a patch-up job, which utterly fails to deal courageously and sensibly with the real issue.

Fortunately, a late amendment will allow women (and a few men), working alone or in pairs from their home, to keep on humpin' and bumpin', at least for now. What happens to these estimated 4000 private workers, or about 40 per cent of the sex trade in the state, will depend on the attitude of local councils under the magnificent local environmental plans of the Planning Minister, Frank Sartor.

The Brothels Bill, which amends the Restricted Premises Act and other laws, is not without its high-handed elements. Local courts can issue orders cutting off the electricity, gas or water to premises deemed to be illegal brothels. Deciding whether premises are being used for sex will not be a difficult task because natural justice requirements need not apply when a court is considering a "brothel closure order".

In making orders for premises not to be used as a brothel, the Land and Environment Court can rely on circumstantial evidence and may make a finding "without any direct evidence".

Presumably this is to protect the morals of council workers who until now had to sacrifice themselves in the cause of tracking down illegal sex operators. However, it does seem a high price to pay to keep a few souls unsullied.

Corruption, real and potential, remains alive. There is an Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry into whether a local council official at Parramatta was receiving money and sex in return for a *bit of protection.*

Instead of relying on a complaints mechanism, sex worker advertisements in local newspapers are now frequently used to track down potential brothels, and it is this "self-initiated enforcement" that has the potential to lead to official temptations.

This was all examined by the Sex Services Premises Planning Advisory Panel, which produced a document in 2004 but only released it last year. It would have provided councils a model for ensuring sex premises were operating in a healthy and unobtrusive fashion - but has never been acted upon. In any event those proposals have been overtaken by the Sartor model of local council planning.

But back to the small, independent workers operating out of apartments or the spare room of their houses. Under the Sartor plan, councils were given up to four years to make special provisions to exempt private workers from the underpinning moral requirements of the planning code in residential areas.

There is no way on earth that any council would provide for this sort of latitude. Councils, as we know, are fierce enforcers of rectitude. At the moment about half the private sex operators are in a legal black hole because there are no council rules that limit or restrict the areas in which they can work.

The other half are operating under council rules that restrict the places in which commercial sex may take place, such as certain distances from residences, schools, businesses and so on. Very few comply with these requirements and so, strictly speaking, are illegal.

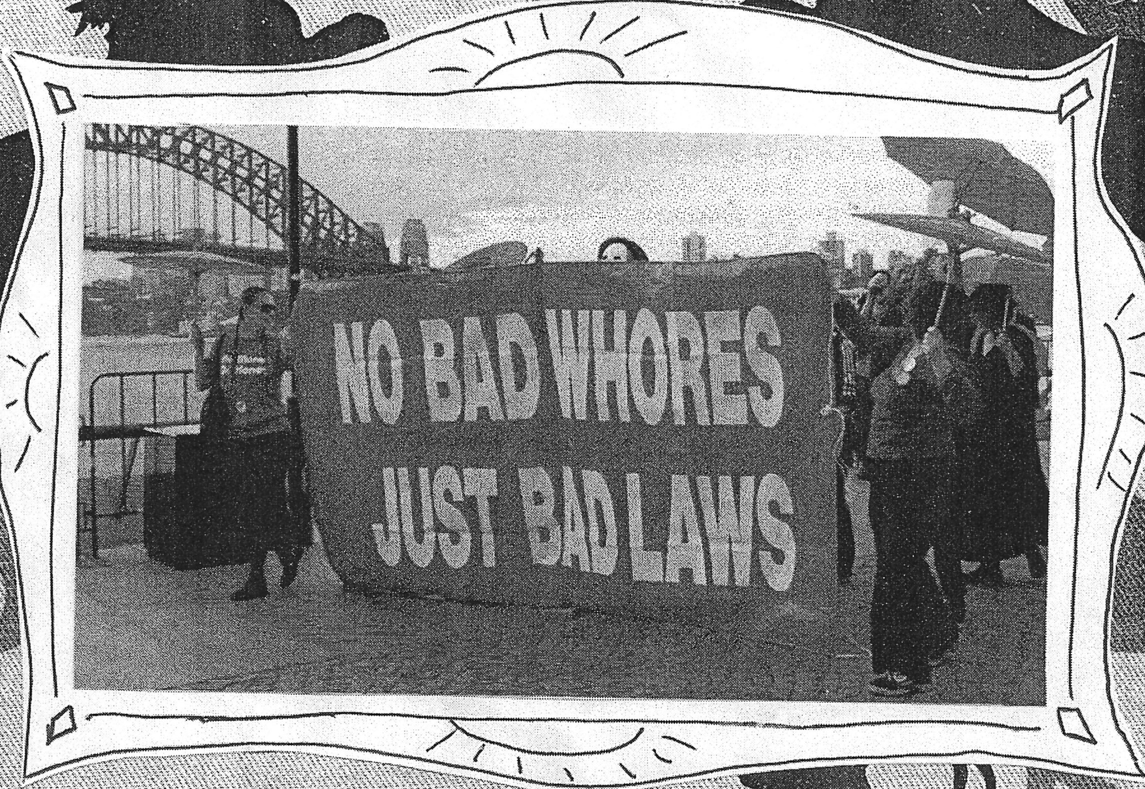
This will provide further ammunition to the ABA, which is not the Australian Bar Association but the Adult Business Association, although understandably sometimes the two bodies are confused.

The sexy ABA represents the "white shoe" licensed brothels, and its message is pretty clear. It doesn't like independent working girls or boys or small brothels anywhere near their red plush boudoirs. It campaigns to get these "illegal" workers closed down. Competition is bad in the sex game and the ABA will be on the Government's tail for another round of amendments if the councils keep turning a blind eye to the extra-jurisdictional trade.

Already, the ABA has said that to be allowed to advertise sex in the newspapers (predominantly the Murdoch papers) you should be a wholesome, upstanding and, importantly, paid-up member of the association.

Let's hope the Murdoch press ensures that the right of independent workers to advertise will be a vital plank in the "free the media" campaign that has so excited our media barons.

As one of the members of the Scarlet Alliance, representing the independent sex workers, has said: "Just because you're licensed doesn't mean you're not sleazy."



invasion of land, invasion of bodies

a critique of the left's response to the invasion of the NT

Probably everyone reading a copy of this reader condemns the Federal Government's military 'intervention' into Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. I've read several pieces that oppose the move, both in mainstream media and from various groups that for the sake of brevity I'll just lump together as "the left". They usually say it's an election ploy, that it's a racist attempt to return to paternalistic control of Indigenous affairs, that it's militaristic and high-handed, or that it's a land grab to allow for more mining and nuclear waste dumps.

I think all these are true. However, I wonder why so few people are directly addressing the reason the government is giving for the intervention – stopping child sex abuse? Sure, a lot of things I've seen point out that not one of the 97 recommendations of the Little Children Are Sacred report are being followed, and that exclusively targeting black communities is racist (as if all the perpetrators of child sexual abuse in these communities are black, or that this abuse doesn't happen elsewhere in Australia). But out of everything I've read, just two articles – one in the Sydney Morning Herald (which did so vaguely and in passing), and one in the Mutiny zine - examined what it means to perform mandatory sexual health examinations on all Aboriginal children in these communities.

"Mandatory" means parents and children are unable to choose not to have an examination. Or, rather, they can say "no", but their decision won't be respected. Therefore, the examinations are done without consent. If they're anything like my last sexual health check-up, these examinations include taking swabs of the inside of the vagina and/or anus, which was scary and invasive even though I'd made a completely free decision to get tested.

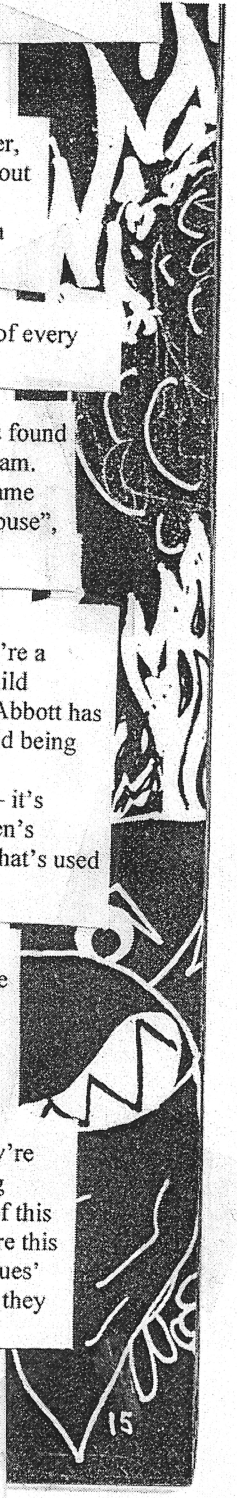
This is non-consensual interference with sexual organs. This is State-enforced sexual abuse of every Aboriginal child in these communities.

I had a friend once who had been sexually assaulted as a child. She told me that when her parents found out, she was forced, against her wishes, to recount everything to police and undergo a medical exam. This was more traumatic for her than the original abuse. Obviously, not everyone will have the same experiences in a similar situation. It does mean, though, that when I say "State-enforced sexual abuse", I don't mean something airy-fairy and theoretical, I mean something that's real and brutal.

The Federal government has retreated from this original plan, and now says all sexual health examinations need to be agreed to by parents. I am unconvinced this will do any good. If you're a parent whose community has been taken over by the military, saying "No, I don't want my child examined for signs of sexual abuse" will probably be taken as grounds for suspicion – Tony Abbott has insinuated this by claiming any "well-meaning parent" would have no problem with their child being examined. He has also said that measures such as removing welfare payments will be used to encourage parents to comply. Agreement under these pressured conditions isn't true consent – it's duress. It also assumes a parent has the right to consent on behalf of their child. I think children's wishes in such matters are paramount, and I question the dichotomy between adult and child that's used to inflict suffering, deny autonomy and restrict rights, all for 'their own good'.

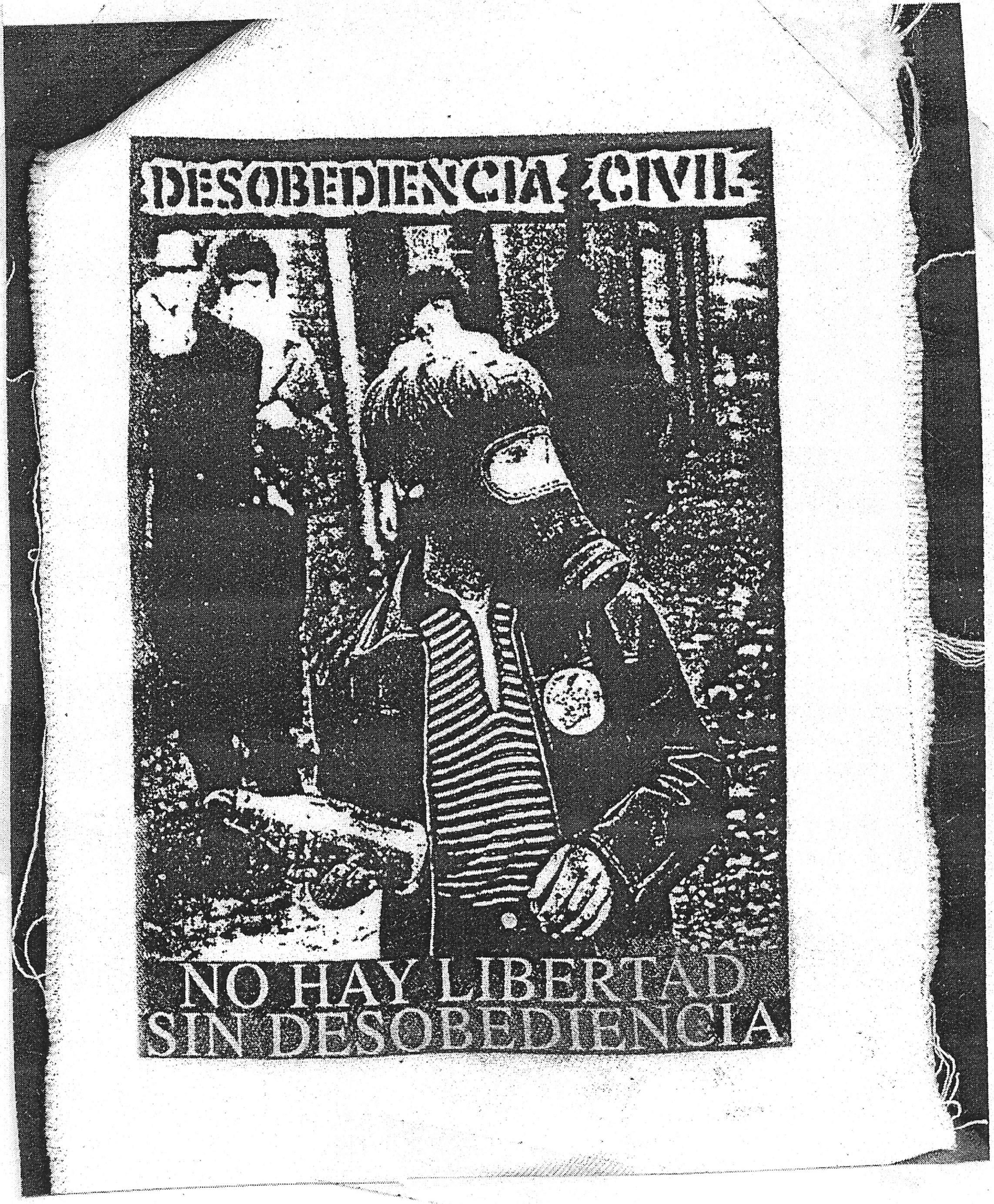
I have to wonder why, out of all the articles written about the military invasion, only a handful raise this. I can only come up with two reasons why this may be so. Either people don't understand what true consent is and what the impact of these examinations can be, or for some ideological or tactical reason they believe it's a less important issue than everything else. I think both of these are the case. Fucked up ideas of what constitutes consent are pretty commonplace, and I think it is this that explains the mainstream media's response.

I think it's the second explanation that's behind the responses from interest groups – whether they're NGOs or activist groups and organisations. It's probably justifiable if, for example, you're writing about the establishment of the nuclear industry in Australia, and therefore the land-rights aspect of this invasion is the most relevant. I can understand that. What I don't understand is when people ignore this issue because their ideology teaches them to focus on the broader political landscape, the 'real issues' behind the whole thing. Or, because their ideas need to have as widespread an appeal as possible, they think anything that's too confronting ought to be left out.

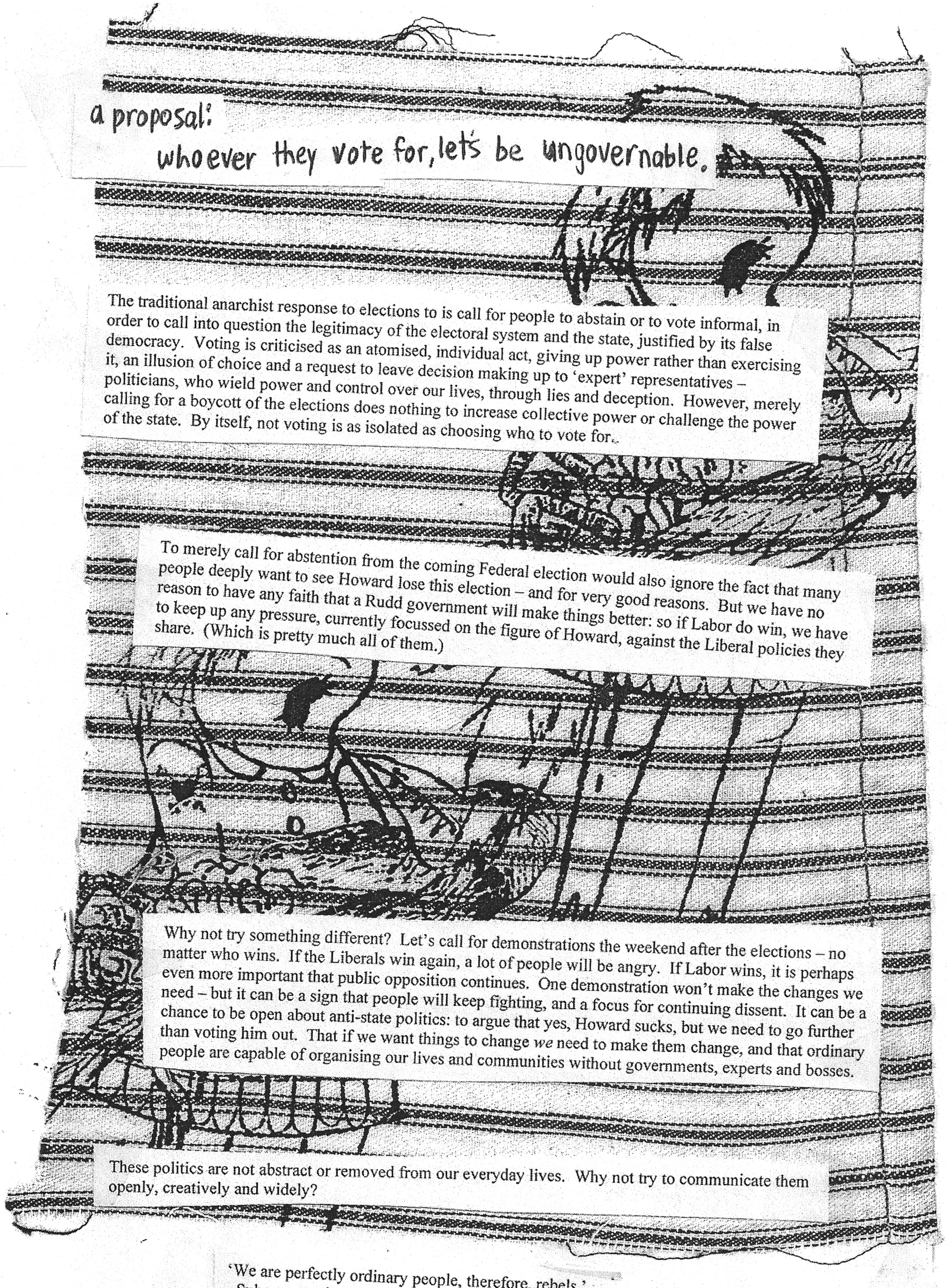


Sure, it's difficult to break down the social constructions that persuade people that it's all OK because they're doctors, it's for the children's health and we need to bring those sex offenders to justice. But it's necessary too. By breaking down the situation into single issues to make our views more palatable, we end up saying something with only a vague resemblance to what we actually believe. And when we only address, for example, the violation of land rights, we leave ourselves open to the right-wing counterattack that we don't care enough about child abuse (and ironically, they're right). Only a quarter of Australians think the Government is doing this out of genuine concern for children, but the rest go along with it because they think at least it does some good. If we point out "Hey, the government is doing this in the name of stopping child abuse, but in fact the plan involves systemic physical, mental and sexual violence against every child in the community", our message can be so much more effective. People will see the horrific disjoint between what's being said and what's being done, and they will riot in the street. At least, I hope they will riot.

I've just read over what I wrote, and have realised the last two points are somewhat misleading. I think they're important, but by concentrating on how the omission of an argument affects our various messages, they miss a fundamental issue: sexual violence should never, ever be de-prioritised.



a proposal:
whoever they vote for, let's be ungovernable.



The traditional anarchist response to elections to is call for people to abstain or to vote informal, in order to call into question the legitimacy of the electoral system and the state, justified by its false democracy. Voting is criticised as an atomised, individual act, giving up power rather than exercising it, an illusion of choice and a request to leave decision making up to 'expert' representatives – politicians, who wield power and control over our lives, through lies and deception. However, merely calling for a boycott of the elections does nothing to increase collective power or challenge the power of the state. By itself, not voting is as isolated as choosing who to vote for.

To merely call for abstention from the coming Federal election would also ignore the fact that many people deeply want to see Howard lose this election – and for very good reasons. But we have no reason to have any faith that a Rudd government will make things better: so if Labor do win, we have to keep up any pressure, currently focussed on the figure of Howard, against the Liberal policies they share. (Which is pretty much all of them.)

Why not try something different? Let's call for demonstrations the weekend after the elections – no matter who wins. If the Liberals win again, a lot of people will be angry. If Labor wins, it is perhaps even more important that public opposition continues. One demonstration won't make the changes we need – but it can be a sign that people will keep fighting, and a focus for continuing dissent. It can be a chance to be open about anti-state politics: to argue that yes, Howard sucks, but we need to go further than voting him out. That if we want things to change *we* need to make them change, and that ordinary people are capable of organising our lives and communities without governments, experts and bosses.

These politics are not abstract or removed from our everyday lives. Why not try to communicate them openly, creatively and widely?

'We are perfectly ordinary people, therefore, rebels.'
- Subcommandante Marcos

mutineers@graffiti.net

a contribution to the debate on violence

by Mark Gawne, Nick Southall & Alexander Brown

In the lead up to the APEC meeting, violence has been made into a central question for the movements against global capitalism. The debate about protest actions has again flared. In Melbourne last year, protests held against the G20 group of world leaders were portrayed, both within the media and sections of the movement itself, as violent. Following the demonstrations, many participants in these actions were targeted in an extensive police operation involving cooperation between Victorian and New South Wales police, raids on people's homes, which included the use of the NSW anti-terrorist squad, abductions by the police of allegedly violent demonstrators and the imprisonment of at least one man who was refused bail for 25 days.

For all the talk of violence, the meaning of the term is rarely examined. Those who criticised or condemned the confrontational tactics of some at the G20 protest, as well as some of the proponents of confrontational tactics, have employed this term without being clear as to its meaning. The language of violence has been effectively deployed by the state, the media and even sections of the movement itself to divide and de-legitimise protest and conflate it with terrorism. This is extremely dangerous. As a movement we must not allow the state and capital to define our struggle on their terms and in their language. To underestimate the seriousness of the situation we now face is similarly dangerous. Making statements concerning a subject as serious as 'protester violence' without careful consideration of its meaning and consequences is likely to help isolate, target and ultimately jail us.

Capital's engineering of an ever present terrorist threat is designed to create an environment in which we are afraid to talk to one another or discuss tactics. Rather than allowing the word 'violence' to be used as a rhetorical device we require a full and frank discussion of protest tactics. What is 'violence'? How is it to be defined?

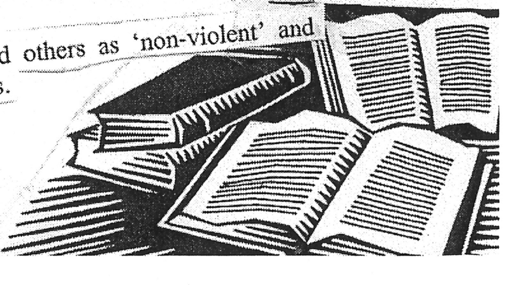
'Violence' is a catch-all phrase which is relatively easy to condemn. Yet, what is classified as violence reflects the concerns and priorities of different classes, movements, social groups and individuals. Some kinds of violence and some kinds of actions that cause harm, injury and death, are considered far worse than others. It is a common perception, promoted by capital, the state and the media, to view violence as the illegitimate use of force. Peace demonstrators can be described as 'violent ferals' and the bombing of children as 'combating terror'. The definition of violence as illegitimate force allows those who are 'defending the law' and 'protecting social order' to present themselves as opposed to violence, as the protectors and keepers of 'the peace'. If we accept these parameters we help to disguise the daily violence of oppression, condone police/military violence and delegitimise militant struggle.

If we examine tactics as they are, rather than allowing them to be subsumed by a catch-phrase, we see a much more complicated, more accurate and more useful picture. Tactics employed by protesters include: marching in the streets, rallying, sending petitions and other written protests, staging performance pieces, dressing up, going on strike, locking-on to machinery or buildings, blockading etc. Other tactics include property damage: defacing buildings or signs with graffiti or other means, usually emblematic of corporations or the state, smashing windows or other fixtures, setting fire to cars, rubbish bins or other items, smashing police vehicle's windows or damaging police property. Another category of tactics would include throwing marbles under the feet of police horses in an attempt to impede their mobility or make them fall over, hitting police or other agents of the state. Even this cursory glance at tactics illustrates the inadequacies of an uncritical use of the terms non-violence and violence.

Some protesters, including participants in the G20 protests, who advocated confrontation with police, have argued that all forms of struggle are legitimate within the context of the overwhelming violence perpetrated by capital and the state on a daily basis throughout the world. Yet, these arguments have themselves invoked violence and non-violence in a relatively uncritical manner.

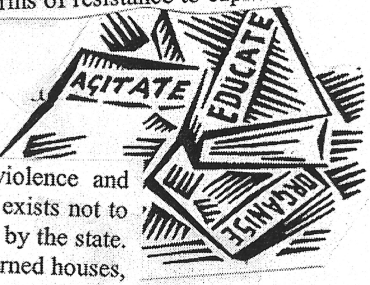
The war of terror is a strategy of tension that seeks to scare us, divide us and set us against each other. Without a shared meaning, the use of the terms 'violent' and 'non-violent' protest often serves only to divide the movement. Some sections of the movement are less willing to confront the state than others. Other groups and individuals are willing to engage in tactics which are more directly confrontational.

Artificially labelling some protesters as 'violent' and illegitimate and others as 'non-violent' and legitimate can obscure our common ground and highlight our differences.



Many of the arguments following G20 were about what limits we impose on each other and what tactics we use to defend ourselves. Those who advocate 'non-violent' protest argue that the use of 'violence' restricts the power of those who do not want to take part in it, that those who are confrontational create situations where the 'violent' have power over the 'non-violent'. Those who see the imposition of 'non-violence' as a restriction on their power to act, consider the advocates of 'non-violence' as exerting power over them. Yet, sections of the 'movement of movements' have played into the hands of the state on this question. Following the G20 protests, some distanced themselves from protesters who had become the target of police repression. Those who denounced protestor 'violence' and named sections of the movement as responsible were cooperating with the state and capital, helping to launch and condone repression. Others, even though they may not have agreed with all the protest tactics employed, took the principled stand that we must defend each other and oppose police repression. This position allows a space for difference, while trying to keep the movement together and refuses to allow activists to be isolated and thereby more easily repressed.

If there is a possibility, or increasing likelihood, that protesters are in danger, it would be foolish not to prepare to defend ourselves. In reality, the class struggle is violent. The state employs police, military, prisons and other violent institutions to repress dissent. Those in the state and the media who lecture and demonise us for being violent are daily involved and complicit with the massive violence of invasions, occupations, prisons, detention centres, etc. Many people, in resisting the imposition of this violent capitalist rule, defend themselves physically. For example, without attempting to glorify rioting, we can recognise the Redfern, Macquarie Fields and Palm Island riots as forms of resistance to capital and the state.



In the debate concerning violence a distinction can be drawn between defensive violence and voluntaristic violence. Examples of defensive violence include the Zapatista army which exists not to make war but to protect autonomous communities from violence perpetrated against them by the state. When the army went into their communities, killed unarmed people, tortured and raped, burned houses, uprooted villages, imprisoned hundreds, the Zapatistas stood firm to their strategy of non-violence. Instead they fought with what they considered the best weapons they had, 'righteousness, solidarity, the word, and popular support'. These forces exist not to bring 'liberation' through the use of armed force but to create a deterrent against a potential attack from the global empire of capital. As the Zapatistas put it in the sixth declaration of the Selva Lacandona: 'the Zapatistas are soldiers so that there will not be any soldiers'.

Voluntaristic violence, by contrast, is the type of violence we expect and experience from capital. This type of violence is perpetrated not in direct response to an equally violent threat but to achieve political, economic and social power such as when police attack unarmed protesters at demonstrations. However, there exist some sections of the 'movement of movements' which seek to justify the use of voluntaristic violence. In periods of crisis the state has often spread fear, panic and despair while directly attacking militants to provoke a 'violent' response, which both seek to justify increased state power under a 'state of exception' and isolate militants from popular support. However, while state violence can also be used provocatively, the state's threat of violence is sometimes used to avoid having to use violence. If people are too scared to struggle, the appearance of peace and order can be maintained. Therefore, the choices we face are difficult ones, where protest actions and defiance may involve or lead to the use of violence and where inaction assists the continual daily mass violence of capitalism.

Most people are sick of war and violence. People want peace, but how is peace possible? If peace is no longer on the agenda, how do we fight a 'war against war'? In contrast to the orthodoxy of non-violent direct action (NVDA), the movement of movements has articulated and practiced a wide variety of tactics and strategies. Some of these tactics are pre-figurative, meaning that the tactics themselves are chosen to create and reflect the future society we wish to develop. For many, creating a living example of the future requires finding ways to minimise violence and develop alternative ways of dealing with conflict.

'Non-violence' may itself mean different things to different people. These opinions change over time and may refer to a wide variety of tactics and actions. To take a position 'against' 'non-violence' is therefore simplistic. Today, capitalism faces permanent crisis, causing an intensification of the daily global class war. This is not a war we want; it is a product of the capitalist system. To make a new future we don't want class war. We want an end to class and an end to war.

If we intend to assert our right to dissent and we know the police are preparing to attack us, how can we advertise 'peaceful protests'? The state has clearly indicated and demonstrated its willingness to use violence to stop us. It could be argued that publicising a peaceful event, when this cannot be guaranteed, could be viewed as dangerous and manipulative. On the other hand, most people are probably aware by now of the potential for violence at summit protests, so declaring a peaceful protest will probably not have a major impact on whether people attend.

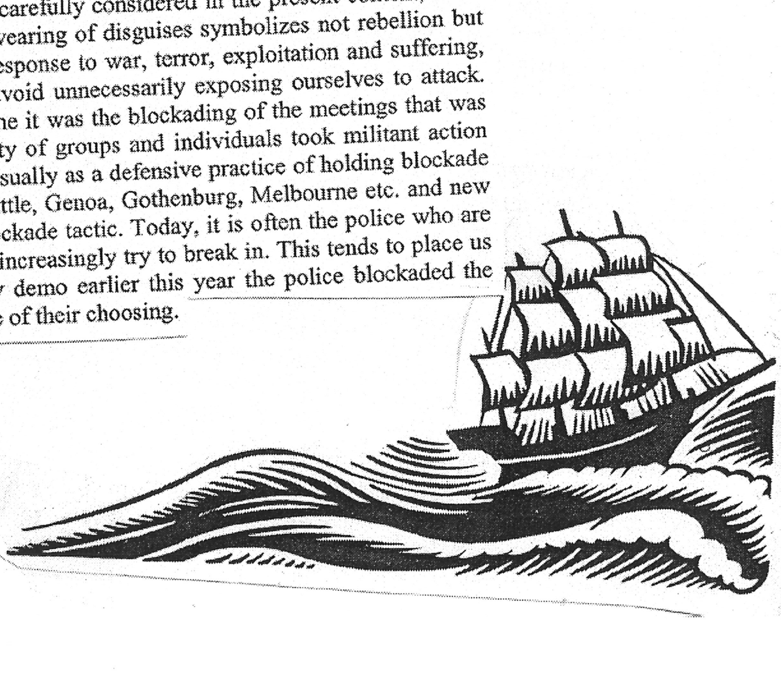
If we don't intend to use violence will advertising a 'peaceful protest' help expose the true source of violence? Demanding peace from the state can be important, but we know that they can't be trusted. We know that the state will use fear, intimidation and division. They will seek to deter people from protesting and prepare to justify their own violence. We know that they are willing and able to fight, frighten, demonise and hurt us. How do we deal with a police strategy that again and again seeks to impose this fear in each and every one of us and erode our sense of common purpose?

If the police make it clear that they are planning repression we need to be clear, honest and serious about this and work to protect ourselves. The state employs violence to counter our resistance. If we create time and space, to develop our autonomy from capital, we have to learn how to defend them. Using the tactics of force, having power over other people, does not really challenge the state, but involves the reaffirmation of the social relations of capital. Defending the movement should not just be about defending ourselves as individuals and we should pay regard to the impact our actions have on others.

In the face of growing repression one tactic protesters have used has been to split up into groups based on their willingness to break the law. This is designed, with varying success, to protect the risk-averse from the physical and legal dangers posed by confrontations with police. This tactic was employed both in Prague in 2000 and in Montreal. Yet, it is clear that for those in power we are all 'violent ferals' and there are limits to the tactics of diversity. Neither the police nor protestors can be expected to honour distinctions that are formulated before an action. Much depends on what happens on the day.

Some sections of the movement criticise direct action and defiance of the law as 'adventurism'. They believe we should only struggle within the parameters set by the state. But those parameters keep getting narrower. Others argue for taking risks which build our creativity, power and courage. When taking militant action, risks cannot be avoided. Instead they need to be realistically evaluated and measures taken to lessen the risks and help each other to cope with them. While NVDA and confrontation with police can be complementary, initiating confrontation with police is much more problematic. Some argue against voluntaristic confrontation with police because they think that it poses and creates false and unnecessary divisions within the movement. Yet it is easy to understand the argument that others should be able to do what they want, as long as they do it in a way that doesn't endanger other people taking action. The question of confrontation has to be decided in specific contexts. We need to avoid the danger that our anger and frustration with others in the movement leads to a lack of concern for their safety and well being. Imposing one tactic on everyone is impossible and authoritarian. Yet, both the use of non-violent and confrontational tactics can potentially create this situation.

The meaning of militancy in the movement must be carefully considered in the present context, since property destruction, voluntaristic violence and the wearing of disguises symbolizes not rebellion but terror for many people. While rage is a reasonable response to war, terror, exploitation and suffering, we need to find ways to use it constructively and avoid unnecessarily exposing ourselves to attack. Both in the 'battle of Seattle' and at s11 in Melbourne it was the blockading of the meetings that was the most powerful and inspiring. Here a wide variety of groups and individuals took militant action which confronted the state and the ruling class, but usually as a defensive practice of holding blockade points. Yet, it was the violent police response at Seattle, Genoa, Gothenburg, Melbourne etc. and new police tactics that has seen a re-evaluation of the blockade tactic. Today, it is often the police who are blockading us. We want to shut them down, but we increasingly try to break in. This tends to place us as offensive and them as defensive. At the Cheney demo earlier this year the police blockaded the protest and forced a confrontation at a time and place of their choosing.



It is our creativity, diversity and unpredictability that they find so hard to manage and control. We must ask ourselves what they want us to do, and then find ways to avoid doing it. Is the creation of a police state/war zone in Sydney symbolic enough to make a powerful point to large numbers of people? If we are to reject the tedium of ritual marches, the passive listening to 'experts', 'representatives', 'leaders', and refuse to be shepherded and controlled, can we confront them with our creativity, spontaneity, pleasure, joy? Or is our despair now so great that we cannot celebrate our desires and our power.

Let us not be caught up in a competition of violence and fear. Let our anger be combined with optimism and confidence. Let them despair, let them live in fear. Not that we will attack them, but that we will refuse, resist and subvert them, both externally and internally, developing and demonstrating alternative ways of relating to each other.

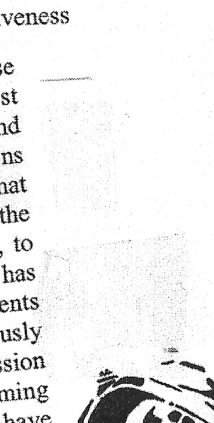
How do we make clear that the threat of violence comes from the state and capital without adding to people's fears? One way is by demonstrating that we will support each other, that we will not turn on each other, that our solidarity gives us power and the ability to protect and care for each other.

A key problem we face is that of organising our defence against the increasing violence and repression of the state. Although it is only early days, it seems important to begin casting critical eyes upon what is happening, and to raise more questions which may help prevent a descent into sectarianism.

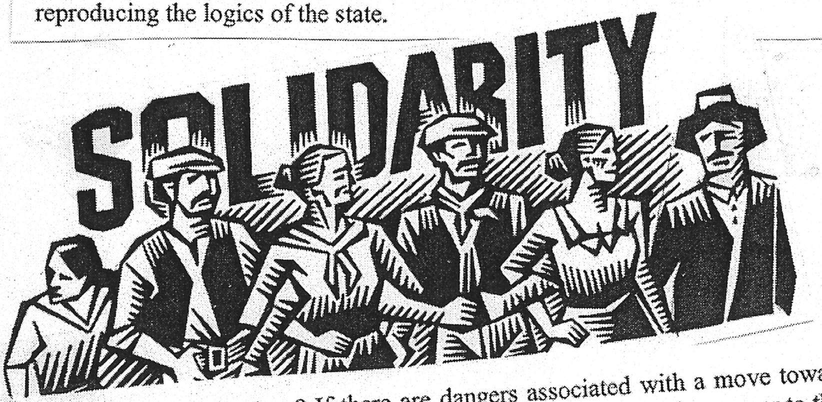
In order to contribute to this debate it is necessary to be somewhat general at this point by distinguishing between two tendencies concerning organisation - secrecy and openness - and how these influence the manifestation of division or solidarity throughout our movements. It seems to us that it is important to look at the tendency towards secrecy and to highlight some of the potential problems with this position. It can be argued that in the face of a crackdown by the state increased levels of secrecy are needed. Yet, it is important to think about what this means, and whether or not such a position actually creates more security.

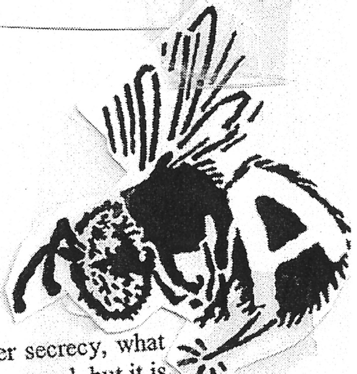
Connected to this question is the idea that there is a hierarchy of effectiveness and action in combating repression, and that in terms of protest the most effective forms are the most illegitimate in the eyes of the state and others. Those participating in these forms of action can view themselves as separate from everyone else, the main target of repression and that to protect themselves they need to be increasingly more secretive. There is a certain truth to elements of this argument, particularly the part about being targeted. What is not so clear in this formulation is the politics and effectiveness of secrecy. We need to ask the question, if our actions and politics already place us in a position that faces greater danger of being targeted, does being more secretive combat this danger? What are the politics of secrecy? Also, in terms of a hierarchy of struggle, it seems mistaken to assert that only the most extreme actions are effective, or even to construct some type of measurement between extremity of action and effectiveness of action.

Sections of our movements, which exist outside of the so-called legitimate forms of protest, are those that are often labelled violent. They fall into the category of 'bad protestors', and are often the most heavily targeted by the state. Whilst it is fundamentally important not to compromise one's politics and practice for the sake of legitimacy on somebody else's terms, or for inclusion based only on conditions one has no say over, it is difficult to see how a move away from communication is useful. It seems that processes of separation and non-communication actually serve the state's ends. It is useful for the forces of repression for us to be divided, and it is useful for them, for the most easily targeted, to separate themselves from everybody else. Numerous historical examples illustrate that the state has used our own sectarianism against us. It has coopted or collaborated with some sections of movements to isolate and attack others, has helped construct leadership elements where they didn't previously exist, identified some elements as the most radical, easily targeted, and unleashed fierce repression under a pretext of decapitating a movement. In so far as we contribute to sectarianism we are harming ourselves and those around us. Of course, we cannot retreat from action, or even militancy, but we have to consider very seriously what we are doing. Does contributing to our own separation from the broadest constituency of struggle really help the revolutionary projects of the multitude?



We also need to think about where our decisions may potentially take us. For example, an argument that makes a case for increased secrecy, separation and lessen communication within the movement might not seem like a big deal right now, but we have to be careful that we resist a trajectory that is going to collapse in on itself – creating more sectarianism and separation. If we decide on a greater secrecy now, then we suffer greater persecution as a result of being more secretive, and if at the same time we are carrying out actions that are more militant than many others, under conditions that sees us separate from any broader movement, are we not creating a gulf between ourselves and everyone else? Are we not producing a logic that contradicts radical democracy and revolutionary politics? Are we not running the risk of producing state-like logics? A position that states that our freedom and practice must be curtailed and limited now so that they can be protected in the future is doomed, and ends up reproducing the logics of the state.





What are the alternatives? If there are dangers associated with a move towards greater secrecy, what options are available that resist these dangers. In our opinion, the answer to this is still general, but it is based on a commitment to the creation of more democracy, on a broader basis, and involves greater communication between tendencies within the movements. This involves a move away from the tendency towards secrecy. It requires a move towards greater communication, organisation and improved decision making processes throughout the movements. Continuing to work at improving horizontal organisation, within our established collectives, groups, and beyond them is a core project of our self-defence. We also need to develop a common language concerning these questions. This is a project that necessarily cannot be restricted to a small, specialised group of militants or activists. It needs to be a generalised project, founded on the basis of commonality.

Whilst this may not be the most popular assertion, it seems that a part of the problem relates to the ease with which we simplify our analyses of, and relationships with, other sections of the so-called left. For example, the way in which we use the term 'trots' to homogenise a whole group of people, and conversely, reducing sections to 'anarchists' or 'ultra-leftists'. This reflects a general complacency to the project of actually building freer social relationships on all involved in such a practice. Whilst we may have disagreements with the general political line of certain groups, it is also important to recognise that contradiction, tension and difference exist everywhere. It is only through processes of discussion, debate and collective practice that we can hope to learn, develop commonality and increase our power. It is both possible, and important, to work on a basis of commonality without collapsing difference and compromising political integrity.

In coming to this very convergence, we have already acknowledged and committed to a general level of respect for the autonomy and difference of other individuals here. We expressly strive for a condition of liberty and autonomy within the spaces we organise. Why is there then a tendency to seal off the borders of this space; to not recognise these principles beyond our immediate networks and groups? Surely we are able to develop praxis sophisticated enough to maintain, for example, a critique of a politics of capture whilst still working as broadly as possible; or that we recognise the fluidity of liberation and authoritarianism, that they are produced and resisted everywhere; and that it is possible to work with people in what may be deemed authoritarian organisations to participate in the production of freedom. We have to recognise that we cannot create in isolation.

We are being forced to act in an atmosphere of increased repression from the state which we often experience as real trauma. This atmosphere of tension will create many traps for us. What is important is that we don't let this situation, this tension, lead us down roads that will inevitably recreate the logics of the state within our movements and organisations. Secrecy, hierarchy, sectarianism and vanguardism are all real and related threats to the struggle for liberation. It is hard to create and protect freedom, autonomy and democracy in the face of a machine so intent on destroying them, yet together this is a challenge we can face and overcome.

Why bands rock (and not just the musical ones....)

By Frew.

When people think of bands, they tend to think of musicians playing together. Bands are also a basic social unit of 'primitive' humans. Wikipedia describes a band as… "the simplest form of human society. A band generally consists of a small kin group, no larger than an extended family or clan. Bands have very informal leadership; the older members of the band generally are looked to for guidance and advice, but there are no written laws and none of the coercion, e.g., police, seen typically in more complex societies."

Evolution is a continuous process. Our brains have developed out of our evolutionary history. Creatures are generally well adapted to their environment. Humans learnt to adapt the environment itself to survive. When our ancestors were threatened with extinction, it was our intellect and social natures that kept the species going. We used tools, worked together to hunt and forage, learnt how to start fires, all of which requires a lot of planning, negotiating etc. and therefore large brains. The Darwin Awards celebrates the continuation of this process by: "Honoring those who improve the species by removing themselves from it!" It also demonstrates that we are just as dumb as the next species. What other species would use a lighter to see how much petrol was in a tanker?

A lot of people misunderstand evolution. This tends to come from misunderstanding the term 'survival of the fittest'. We, by virtue of being alive, represent 10 billion odd years of evolutionary success. All of our ancestors managed to produce off-spring, which makes them and by implication, us 'the fittest' (regardless of actual fitness). Every other creature alive today has survived the same 10 billion years of evolution as you have. It is only our own self-centredness that says we are special. (There is nothing wrong with being self centred. Being trapped in our own bodies, we can't help it.)

Humans are social creatures. We live together in societies and tend to co-operate. Our brains have evolved to deal with complex social situations. We tend to do, not what is best for ourselves as individuals, but what is best for our social group. Evolutionary Psychologists call this 'Reciprocal Altruism,' Anarchists call this 'Mutual Aid.' Most other people know this from its more common name: Love. People will try to tell you that the nation comes first, or god, or the corporation (or whatever trip they are trying to lay on you to make you do what they want), but deep down, most people will first do what is right by their friends; their band.

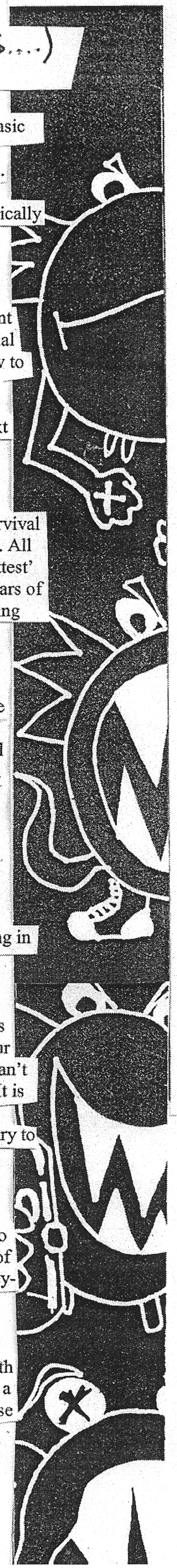
The Monkey-Sphere.

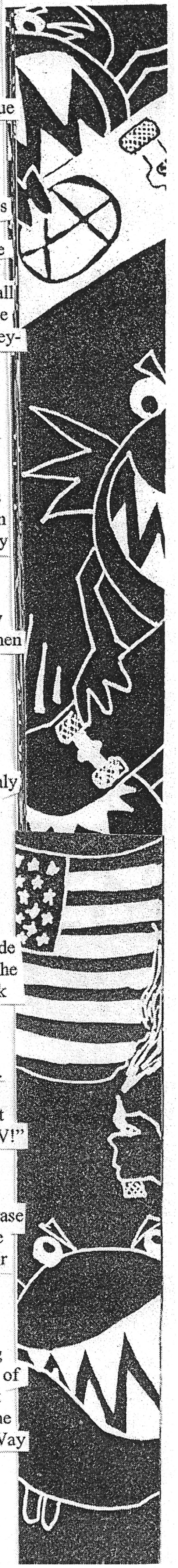
But what about war? What about corporate executives who pay their workers $2 a day whilst raking in millions?

Well, we are only humans. There is a limit to the amount of people we see as 'people'. The humans that we see as people are part of what has been described as our Monkey-Sphere. People outside our Monkey-Sphere don't actually register in our minds as people, they register as things. Our brains can't cope with the sheer size of humanity. There are six billion odd (and I mean it both ways) humans. It is impossible for us to view them all as individuals, our brains just haven't evolved to cope with the information required to do this. We might be relatively smart compared to other species, but contrary to popular belief, we aren't that much smarter.

How many people do you know? There is a limit to the amount of people that we can view as individuals. Everyone else falls outside our Monkey-Sphere. Neuro-scientists compared our brains to other primates. Chimpanzees can function in societies of about 50 monkeys. That is about the limit of their Monkey-Sphere. Our brains are bigger and we can process about 150 people within our Monkey-Sphere. Based on this, it is safe to assume that this is the absolute maximum size of a Band.

Now here is the thing; society operates on a much larger scale, and this is basically what is wrong with it. Tele-marketers will happily ring us with their advertisements because to them, we are just a mark, a potential "client", nothing more than another tick towards their monthly bonus. Just as we'll hurl abuse down the phone at them for making us get off the couch to answer the phone for an ad. In both cases we just don't see them as people, but as a potential "client" or a "tele-marketer".





This only gets worse when you consider the amount of power some people have over hundreds of thousands or millions of people. They aren't dealing with individuals within their band but with vague abstractions who are probably only a minor factor to their jobs anyway.

Take business executives (please), their job is to generate as much profit as possible. Economics is simple maths. When one side is profiting from a transaction, the other side is losing. A company does not generate a profit by paying other companies less than the value of their product. They generate profit by paying workers less than the value of what they produce. With industries like mining (at the moment), it's the environment that is getting exploited (and we all pay with climate change). The executives aren't necessarily bastards (although I do like to characterise them as such because they fall outside my Monkey-Sphere), they don't see their employees as people who have to pay the bills, raise their kids, buy a house etc. They see them as profit centres. The workers just fall outside their Monkey-Sphere.

Its the same with politics. Do you know your local member of parliament? How about a member of Federal Cabinet?

They don't know you either and probably only consider you in the vaguest way, as a statistic. This is why the Liberals could pass their Work-Choices legislation. A lot of Corporate executives fall within their Monkey-Sphere's, yet very few un-skilled workers probably do. Profit helps out the people they know, so it is a good thing (for their fellow Monkeys).

Every government, be they a monarchy, military dictatorship, parliamentary democracy, single party dictatorship, whatever... has been controlled by groups who run things in their own interests even when they have intended to do their best by all of the people they claim to represent. Their brains are just incapable of dealing with all of those people as people.

The Band

Once upon a time, most if not all humans lived in bands. In fact most bands saw themselves as the only 'people'. Other bands were viewed with suspicion, they were seen as non-people, sometimes animals and sometimes spirits. Where resources were in short supply, bands would fight each other. At some point, a victorious band, rather than killing their opponents, hit on the bright idea of enslaving them. This provided a large material benefit to the victorious group and they could spend time making swords, learning to ride horses etc, so they could capture and enslave more bands.

Ever since these times most of us spend a lot of time working for 'the Man.' The Man is the guy outside of our Monkey-Sphere who we have to work for. Originally, the Man was a tribal title (Big Man) of the first victorious bands, who enslaved their neighbours and formed the first Tribes. To quote Jack Black from The School of Rock.:

"The Man, oh, you don't know the Man. He's everywhere. In the White House... down the hall... Ms. Mullins, she's the Man. And the Man ruined the ozone, he's burning down the Amazon, and he kidnapped Shamu and put her in a chlorine tank! And there used to be a way to stick it to the Man. It was called rock 'n roll, but guess what, oh no, the Man ruined that, too, with a little thing called MTV!"

The Band in a musical sense of the word, is a good analogy for the band as a social unit. To paraphrase Jack Black, you don't join a band for groupies, or to be famous; but because you are pissed off at the Man. The Man is the natural enemy of the band. Think about it, what would you rather do? Work for the Man? Or play in a band?

The whole notion of 'work' has only existed since there has been a Man to work for. If you are doing stuff with your band it's participatory. The social BBQ is a great example. There is never a shortage of volunteers to cook, because its fun. When you are by yourself, cooking is more of a chore because it lacks the social interaction. Musical bands get invited to play in social situations and despite all of the trials and tribulations of being in a band (for an accurate description see AC/DC's lyrics to a Long Way to the Top), it's a lot more fun than working for the Man.

Form your own Band and Stick it to the Man.

We live in a world where nearly everyone is governed by people they don't know. We are alienated from those who make decisions about us. They don't know us and tend to view us as vague statistics. We slack off at work because we don't know them and don't care about things like profitability because greater profit requires greater exploitation, which requires more work for less pay (and who besides the Man wants that?).

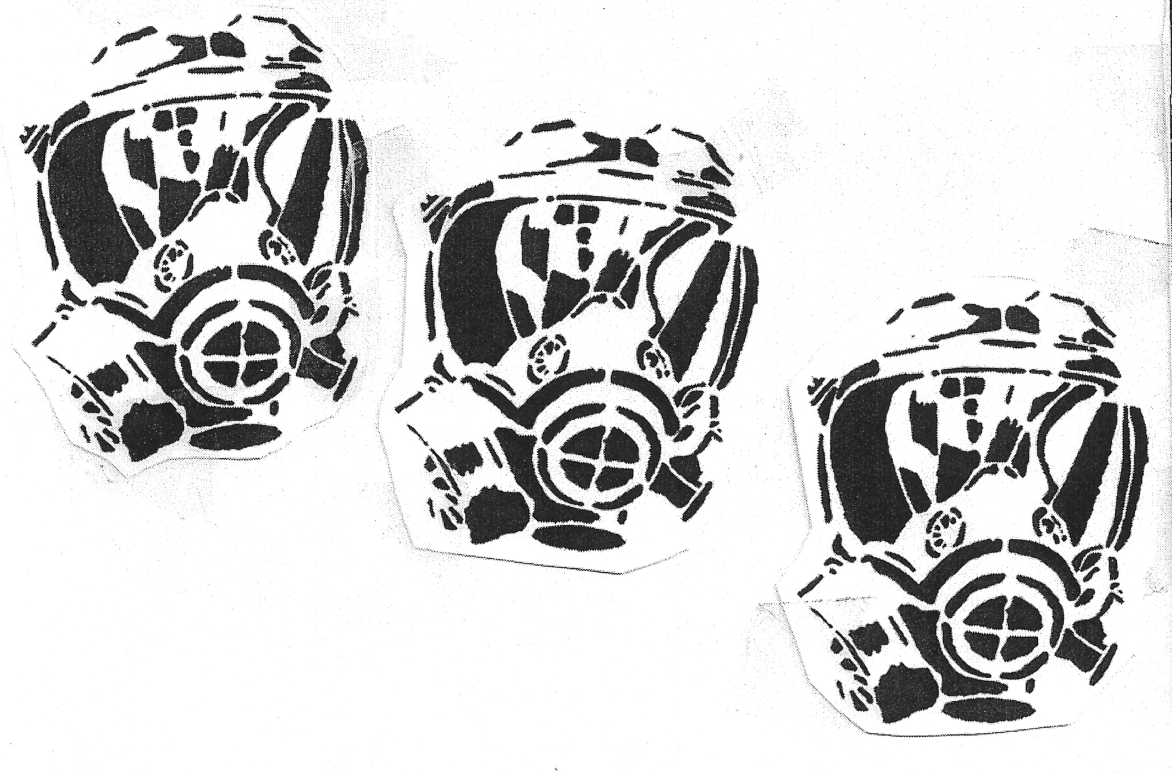
We need to change society so that the Band can return to prominence. Workers need to form collectives to take on the Man at work. People need to form neighbourhood committees to tell the Man that they aren't going to pay the rent. We need to stop leaving decisions that affect our own lives to people who don't know or care about us. In short, we need form bands to stick it to the Man.

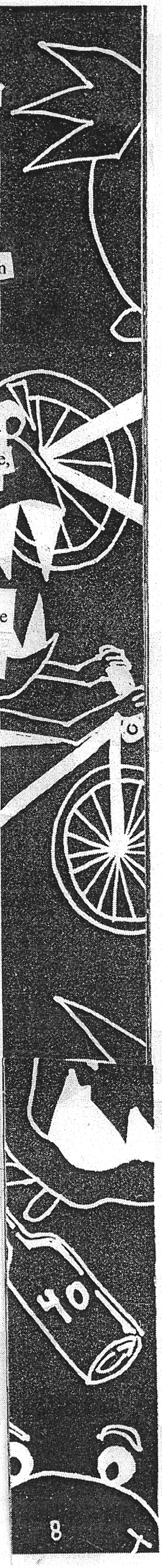
Unlike bands of old, modern bands operate on a much smaller scale. This is because everyone's Monkey-Sphere is different these days. We have learned that other people are actually people, even if our brains can't comprehend them as individuals. With communications and travel being what they are, our Monkeysphere's tend to be global. Like Mike Patton, this makes us members of different bands at the same time. I have friends currently inhabiting four continents, yet I don't know who my Local Council representative is.

The band is a good analogy for how 'work' should be organised. Just as a band will sit down and figure out their set list before they play, other workers should discuss their day's tasks and decide exactly what they should do. E.G. Mechanics should discuss who is going to play with the engine of each car before they start their day's repairs.

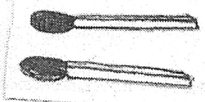
Other primates get by without the need for governments and politicians. Some monkeys, like the pig-tailed Macaque, even elect monkeys to resolve disputes within the band. This is done informally, just as a work-place will elect an OH&S rep or a Union delegate who can be re-called if they aren't doing as good enough job. Surely if other Monkeys can survive without governments and Corporations, so can we.

After all, humans are meant to be the smartest Chimps.





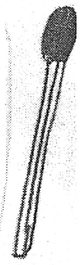
our public transport



I'm a member of a very small lobby group called "Our Public Transport". Most of us in the group are teachers from the Outer East of Melbourne. We started the group because we are fed up with the poor public transport we experience and which our students experience. Most of the stories I want to share won't be new to many readers. Melbourne, rural and regional Victoria, and I'm sure many other parts of Australia, are filled with people whose lives are severely limited and worsened by the poor provision of public transport.

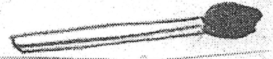
In the outer east of Melbourne, those without cars, particularly young people, and those with lowest incomes, have the choice of walking long distances, hitching or being stuck at home in the evenings and for much of the weekend. There simply are not services. Many young people couch surf every weekend, in order to be closer to public transport and thus access to entertainment and friends. The elderly and disabled are simply stuck at home, unless they have family and friends to assist. In the outer west of Melbourne young people are again stuck at home, unable to access the work and training available in nearby areas because there simply is not enough public transport. Around the Melton area, for example, most adults drive out of area to get to work, young people often don't have this option, and I've spoken to young people and youth workers in the Western suburbs, desperate to connect into opportunities, to get qualifications and jobs and money, but many are forced to say no to employment or training because they simply can't get there.

I'm not kidding when I say that today, and every day, there are thousands of people across Melbourne who would like to be out and about and getting on with their lives, who were instead at home, literally stranded by the expensive and inadequate public transport in this city.

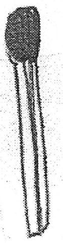


The poor provision of public transport under private operators and after decades of neglect has left the majority of Melbournians relying on cars to get them around, regardless of if they can afford it, which many can't. Unfortunately the cost of running a car is drifting out of the reach of many of us. When petrol hits $5 a litre, as peak oil theory tells us it will, what will people living in the outer suburbs do? How will they travel the often long distances to work, to school, to essential services? How will they get around full stop? Even right now at $1.20-$1.30 a litre, each tank full is a substantial part of your weekly budget, let alone all the other costs of keeping a car. It's running at $100-200 a week!! Anyone living on minimum income, on centrelink payments or even earning a bit more but with a whopper mortgage is struggling RIGHT NOW with petrol prices.

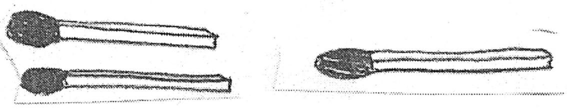
The trade-offs are clear – less money for food, for excursions and books at school, less money for a whole lot of other essentials – because if there isn't regular, reliable and affordable public transport available, then running a car is non-negotiable. If I can't get to work without a car, then I can't earn money for anything, but if I keep spending on running a car then that chunk of my income isn't buying everything else we need.



The logical solution is for us to face this as a whole community. Melbourne, including the outer suburbs simply must put massive effort and funding into upgrading our public transport system. This has to be our ongoing demand, up to and after we sack Connex and Yarra Trams, the private operators. We need to demand democratic input, as a community, in decisions around which new train lines are built, which new bus routes and how many more services are run on existing lines.



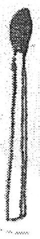
Isolation and social exclusion are one direct result of poor public transport in Melbourne's outer suburbs, where working class people know acutely that politicians don't represent them . Politicians and decision makers do not themselves



experience the pains of a poorly resourced, profit driven public transport system. They don't experience it, they don't get it, and yet they claim to be representing our interests.

The people of Melbourne deserve and need a public transport system which is regular, reliable and affordable. This is not just a transport issue, this is an issue about the ability of people to access all other parts of their lives – education, work, relationships with family and friends, buying food, visiting the doctor, community, sport, culture.

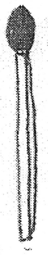
The current appalling state of Melbourne's public transport system is leaving thousands of us waiting and waiting and waiting for the services we rely on to get us to work, to get us home, to get us out and about doing everything we need to do to survive, everything we want to do to be happy and fulfilled.



The dominant experience of public transport users in the outer suburbs is waiting in cold, exposed train, tram and bus stops – desperately willing that late service to arrive so that we won't be docked or sent to the principal's office for turning up late, so that we won't miss the last connecting bus or a long awaited appointment, so that we can pick up the kids from school – so that we can get on with all the things we need and want to do – instead of waiting, getting cold and grumpy and tired.

We are being conned. Connex and Yarra Trams are running substandard public transport services. They are making big profits and have shown us they are either not interested or not capable of providing a good train and tram system in this city. We must get rid of them.

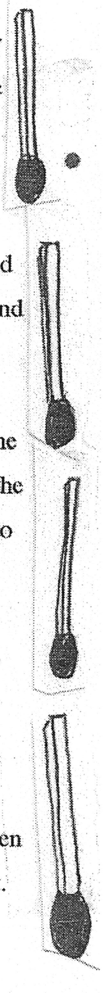
The moment I snapped, and decided I wanted to get active on this issue was at Ringwood station. A train meant to connect to our replacement bus service left as we all arrived on the platform. The attending Connex staff member told me the timetabling of connecting trains was out of their hands and that "Connex apologises for the inconvenience". I've heard that phrase so often it sends me over the edge. I started to complain to the Connex staff member, in a friendly manner because I certainly don't blame the platform staff. Several other commuters joined in. He quickly called over a security guard. They handed me a glossy leaflet – send your complaints to our customer complaint service. I felt thwarted and powerless. I know exactly what kind of form letter I would get back from the customer complaint service. And I know also that I don't have options.



The train and tram systems hold a monopoly, in most parts of Melbourne, there is not another way to get, via public transport from the city to most outer suburbs, without using a Connex train. We're captive commuters, forced to keep using a substandard service because we don't have choices. And actually I think they're OUR trains, OUR train lines, OUR city. I'm mad that Connex can keep cancelling trains, disrespecting my time, and that the government and Connex can play blame games and keep on not improving the service I rely on. I'm really mad. Public transport is a basic need. It is not ethical or responsible for a government or a community to hand over a monopoly control of these basic public services to predatory multinational corporations like Connex and the companies that own Yarra Trams. Connex's parent company Veolia is the world's biggest water company, unscrupulously profiteering from holding a monopoly over the water which flows into peoples homes across many countries.

Our current Minister for Public Transport, Lyn Kosky has been fairly open that she is not interested in running a public transport system. I'm not clear what it is she actually does all day long. A minister for public transport with no interest in running public transport? The group I'm involved in issued her a challenge to not use her car for a week. She declined. We then issued a "Spot Kosky" Competition on our website – inviting the public to send in pictures of her riding public transport, as she claims to do. It's been six weeks and there have been no sightings. I don't believe she uses it, apart from occasional publicity stunts.

We wanted her to rely on it – wanted her to experience the frustration of trying to navigate across this big, complex city on public transport. Is she too good to have her nose stuck in some dudes armpit on the way home from work, like many of us do? The delays, cancellations, the sardine can feel of many train carriages. She was not willing. It's hardly surprising that she and this state government aren't passionate about running a first rate public transport system. They have chauffeur driven cars – their experience is a world apart from that of the many people across Melbourne who rely on public transport.



Let's play a game for a minute. Imagine that governments planned beyond their electoral term. That they were truly concerned about our environmental, social and economic futures. That they made decisions based only on the public good.

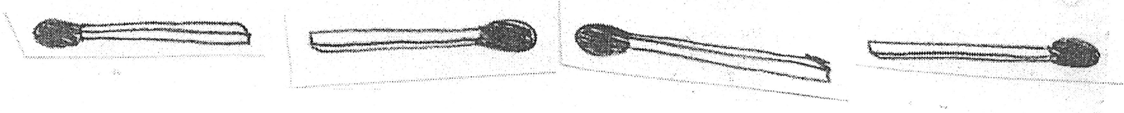
Now try to imagine the kind of public transport that government would plan for. They would find creative and committed public transport planners, they would involve transport workers and the community, and start planning and building a public transport system which meant each and every person in Melbourne could step out their front door and within a 400 meter walk be at a form of public transport that arrives every 10 minutes.

So in my dream that would mean a train line along every existing freeway, train lines to Doncaster, Rowville, Caroline Springs and more. Then making the spokes into a web (which it once was) – a circle train line around the ends and the middle of the existing lines. They'd bring in thousands more buses that took direct routes getting us where we need to go via an efficient route and which connected up to arriving trains. And of course they'd increase the frequency and extent of services on existing lines, every ten minutes all day, and then services continuing all night.

As the new services were rolled out, renewable fuels would be used and existing services upgraded, electricity generated from wind and solar, biodiesel in buses.

Acknowledging that we all pay for public transport through our taxes, they would make the services affordable, or even free. Instead of building new freeways and roads they would pour those many billions of dollars into public transport. The stranglehold of the road lobby would end.

So then let's imagine how people would respond to this kind of massive upgrade to public transport. Many of us would joyfully keep using it. Many more people would start to leave their car at home or not bother buying one. As petrol prices get out of the reach of many of us, there would be a real alternative in place – a mass based public transport system. Trains, trams and buses ultimately replacing the car as the main form of transport. A new era - The age of Public transport - a sustainable, social and economically smart alternative to the age of the car. No more road rage, getting grumpy in traffic, acquired brain injuries after a moments inattention at the wheel. No more smog alert days. A future where we can feel positive that we are finding and putting place solutions to the massive environmental problems we face.

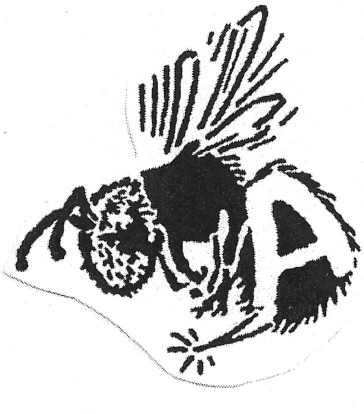


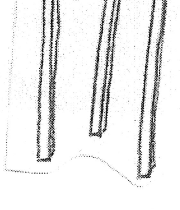
When we imagine that kind of future, there's a niggling voice, isn't there? It will never happen, politicians can't think long term, they're bound to business interest, people love their cars…

I challenge you all to fight for this future, because it's both necessary and possible. However it will take a fight. This future will not happen while multinationals like Connex, Transdev and Transfield (the owners of Yarra Trams) control our public transport system. They are not motivated by public interest. They are corporations and so duty bound to maximise profits to shareholders. They will rort and scheme and manipulate our politicians to gain greater profits. Connex made a $70 million profit out of Melbourne this past two years. Instead of our money going into these profits, instead of it paying for scheming corporate public relations, it should be going into buying more trains, trams and buses, building infrastructure and running excellent services. Instead of the road lobby bleeding us dry, the public transport lobby needs to become strong and loud. That's all of us!

We need to get very active in these next couple of months. We need to make it absolutely clear that we won't allow the government to renew the contracts with Yarra Trams and Connex. They must not be allowed to hold a monopoly over this basic public service. We must convert our anger into action. Talk to people about the need for change, start up conversations on the train, in your workplace. Hand out leaflets. Ring talkback radio, write to the papers. Join the Linkup Melbourne email list to be notified of when there are opportunities to be heard. Visit your local politician, tell them how irate you are, it'll take less time than you waste regularly due to delayed, cancelled and overfull trains. Take part in some more direct forms of action – we need to plan for mass fare boycotts. Mass rallies in the streets. The group I'm involved in will continue to stage stunts and other forms of fun and empowering direct action. If you want to participate, check out our website www.ourpublictransport.org.

The challenge is not just to believe that change is needed, it's to believe that it's possible and to act to make it happen! Choose the type of action that suits you best, but make sure you send out this resounding message – the contracts with Yarra Trams and Connex MUST NOT BE RENEWED. The government must get itself organised to run a community directed public transport system which is regular, reliable and affordable and which is run entirely for the PUBLIC INTEREST, not for profits.

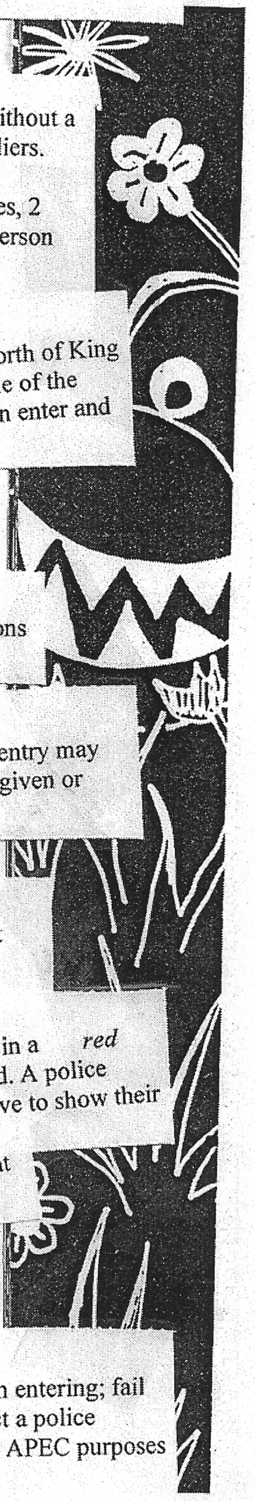




apec police powers 22nd August 2007.

The special powers given to police under the *APEC Meeting (Police Powers) Act 2007* will be in force from 30 August to 12 September. The main APEC event is the Leaders' Week, with September 7 (the Friday) a public holiday and the largest protest planned for September 8 (the Saturday).

Restricted areas and declared areas
The Act speaks of two types of security zones: "restricted areas" and "declared areas". To make them easier to visualise, this article will refer to them as red areas and green areas (respectively). Red areas are not yet official, but are likely to be the Opera House, Government House, hotels, and the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.



The red areas are areas of maximum security. Police may search all non-residential premises without a warrant. It is likely that they will be surrounded by fences and armed police or even armed soldiers. There is a legal obligation to provide ID to a police officer on request. It is an offence punishable by 6 months imprisonment (in some circumstances, 2 years) to try to enter a red area without special justification. Special justification means that a person lives or works in the area. The rest of this article will only speak about green areas.

Green areas: geography
These are parts of the Darling Harbour Area, the Hickson Road area and the central CBD north of King Street. It is an area which includes Martin Place, parts of the Rocks, Circular Quay and some of the waters surrounding the Opera House. There is a presumption that members of the public can enter and leave the green areas.

Green areas: check points, cordons and road blocks
At the entrance to green areas, or once inside a green area, the police may set up check points, cordons or road blocks in order to stop and search people or vehicles. The police can close roads.

Green areas: searches and prohibited items
The police may do a pat-down search as a condition of entering the green area. A person's entry may also be made conditional upon giving the police a prohibited item. A police officer who is given or seizes a prohibited item doesn't have to give it back.

Green areas: reasonable directions
Police officers have the power to give reasonable directions to any person or group providing that it substantially assists security, safety or "in preventing or controlling a public disorder."

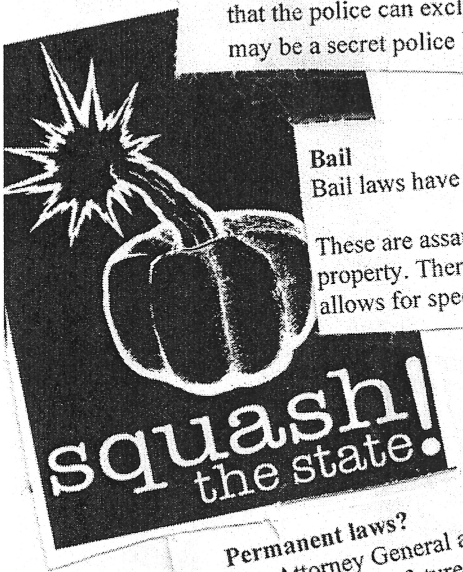
Green areas: is being told to prove your ID a reasonable direction?
There is a clear obligation to give your name to a police officer upon request if they are in a red *area*. There is no clear obligation to do so in a *green area* - the law seems a bit confused. A police negotiator advised a representative of Stop Bush 2007 on 17 August that people will have to show their IDs to police officers in the green areas.

Refusing to comply with a "reasonable direction" is not an offence, but allows the police to escort that person from the green area.

Green areas: keeping people out
A person can be excluded from a green area if they fail to agree to a pat-down search on entering; fail to agree to their vehicle being searched on entering; unlawfully resist, hinder or obstruct a police search; fail to give up a prohibited item as a condition of entry; are on a road closed for APEC purposes or fail to comply with a reasonable direction

Green area: excluded persons' list
One of the powers that have gained media attention is the creation of an excluded persons' list. No criminal convictions are necessary to be on the list. It is only necessary that the Police Commissioner satisfy himself that a person would pose serious threats to the safety of persons or property in a green or red area. Police have said they will write to people beforehand saying that they are on the list, but they don't have to legally keep this promise.

Although setting a chilling precedent, it may be that the existence of an excluded person's list is a bit hyped up. It is easy enough for the police to stop a person from entering a green zone, regardless of whether or not they are on the list. Under the Act, police can exclude any person who "without lawful excuse, fails to comply with a reasonable direction given to the person," which comes close to saying that the police can exclude anyone they don't like. The list may or may not be made public, or there may be a secret police list, with another for public consumption.



Bail
Bail laws have been changed in relation to three specific offences.

These are assaulting a police officer, throwing a missile at a police officer and maliciously damaging property. There is a presumption against bail for people charged with these offences. The Act also allows for special audiovisual links in relation to bail applications for these offences.

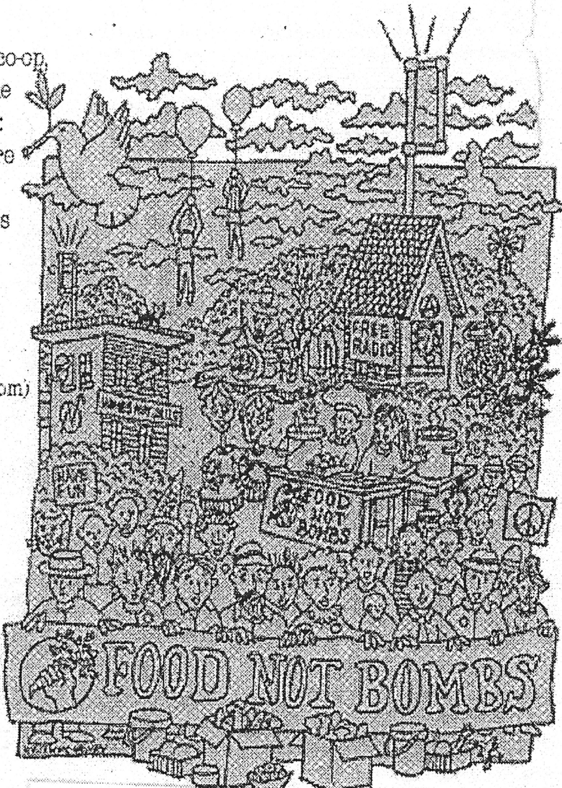
Permanent laws?
The Attorney General and the Police Minister are to report on whether the special powers are "appropriate for future meetings or events comparable to an APEC meeting."

Human Rights Monitors will provide legal observers at the APEC protests and organise a list of on-call solicitors who are able to give legal advice. More info from dalemills@cantab.net or 0422 644 363.

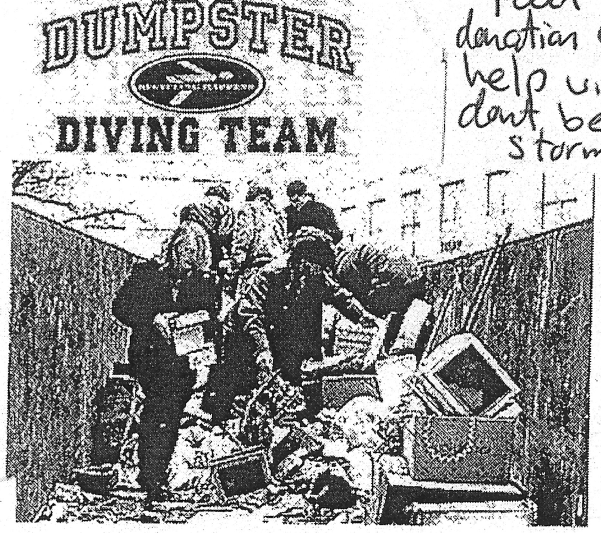
Food Supplies

if you're already a member of a food co-op, you'll get a 10%discount in any aussie food co-operative. some in sydney are:
alfalfa house, 113 Enmore Rd, Enmore
unws food co-op, Roundhouse, UNSW
uts food co-op, in the dungeons of uts (so just ask security)
usyd food co-op, upstairs, Sydney Uni SRC building, City Rd

for a **conventional supermarket try** (stealing from)
broadway shopping centre, where city rd meets broadway
iga newtown, 259 King St, Newtown
woolworths, Town Hall, cnr George St and Park Sts
iga Paddington, 364-366 Oxford St
surry hills shopping village, cnr Cleveland and Crown Sts (great dumpsters)
marrickville metro, 34 Victoria Rd enmore (also great dumpsters)



Food will be avail. by donation @ Fitv space. help will be needed, so dont be shy - cook up a storm for ya mates



Dumpster Diving

The above mentioned supermarkets have excellent and very free dumpsters out the back. The food is still edible, and is gonna be wasted if you don't save it from landfill. **So let's fuck this throw out culture and go dumpstering!**

cheap+ = vegan thai food @ Green Palace
182 King St, Newtown. Yum!

VEGIE/VEGAN-FRIENDLY CAFES/RESTAURANTS

Sydney and City area

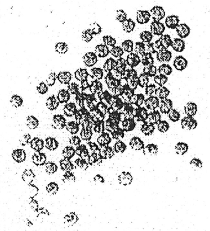
Bodhi Café (mon sun 7am 9pm) Shop 8 Central Station. Eddy Ave, Sydney, 92816162.

Bodhi in the Park (mon sun 11am 4pm) Cook and Phillip Park.Cnr William and Collge Sts, Sydney. 93602523. Vegan Thai and Chinese Style

Mother Chu s Vegetarian Kitchen (mon sat noon 3pm 5 10pm) 367 Pitt St, Sydney, 93822826. Respected Vegan diner

Sydney Pitt St Vegetarian Rest (mon sat, 11am 10pm Sun 11am 4.30pm) 359 Pitt St, 92833398, vegan+vegie Asian style

Zenergy Vegetarian foods (mon fri 7.30am 4.30pm) 359 Pitt St, Syd, 92647606, euro style



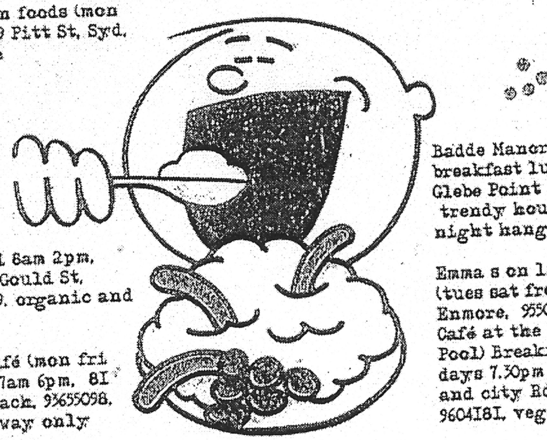
Veg Thai Cafe (lunch noon 3pm, dinner 6 11pm), 233 Oxford St, Darlinghurst, 93606567, vegan friendly.

Laurie s Veg Bondi (mon sun midday 10pm), 286 Bondi Rd Bondi, 93650134, 70% vegan, 30%veg+ organic coffee

Macro s Wholefoods Organic Café, seven days, 31 35 Oxford St, Bondi Junction, 93897611, veg and organic

Maya Masala, (mon sun 10am 10.30pm), 470 Cleveland St, Surry Hills, 96998663, North and South Indian style.

Vegal Kitchen (mon sat, 4.30pm 10pm), 73 Frenchman s Rd, Randwick, 93984406, Chinese vegan



Badde Manors Café, daily breakfast lunch and dinner, 37 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe, 96603797, trendy house coffee and late night hang

Emma s on liberty veg cuisine (tues sat from 6pm), 59 Liberty St, Enmore, 95503458, Lebanese veg14.

Café at the Pool (Victoria park Pool) Breakfast and Lunch seven days 7.30pm 5pm, Cnr Parramatta and city Rds, Victoria Park, 9604181, vegan and veg

Bamboo Café (wed fri 8am 2pm, sat sun, 8am 4pm) 45 Gould St, Bondi Beach, 93657599, organic and vegan

Earth Food Store/Café (mon fri 7am 6.30pm, sat sun 7am 6pm, 81 Gould St , Bondi Beach, 93655098, organic and take away only

Govinda s Rest and Cinema (mon sun 6pm 10pm) 1st floor 112 Darlinghurst Rd, Darlinghurst, 93805162, veg, cinema booking essential.

House of Soy (wed mon 11am 6.30pm) 294B Campbell Parade, North Bondi, 93000033, organic soy based burgers

Iku Wholefoods (mon sun 10am 9pm, 62 Oxford St, Darlinghurst,93809780, organic and veg.

Iku wholefood (mon sat 11am 8pm) 279 Bronte Rd, 93695022, organic and veg

Green Gourmet (daily 11.30am 2.30pm, 5.30pm 9.30pm (buffet nightly)), 115 117 King St, Newtown, 95195330, Vegan Chinese. No onion or garlic

(and next door for vegan ice cream).

Hari Kriska food for life (mon sat 12.30 6.30pm Sun 6 7pm, 1st floor 329 King St, Newtown, 95506424, cheap and cheerful

Harvest Veg Rest (sun thurs, 6 9.30pm fri sat, 6 10.30pm), 71 Evans St, Rozelle upmarket service and atmosphere.

(thanx to Forbes give 4 this pg.)

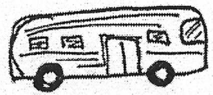
TransPoRt

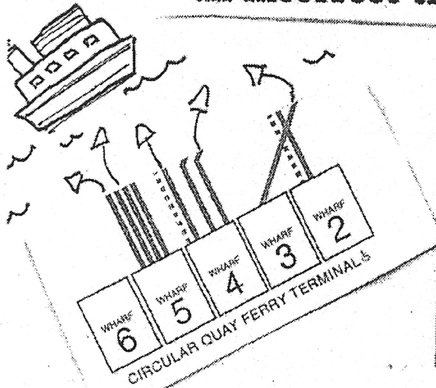
Sydney public Transport is a tad complex. FAF collective suggest riding bikes or walking (though bike paths are limited, and traffic can be hectic)
Sydney transport is a cmoplex network of buses, trains and ferries.

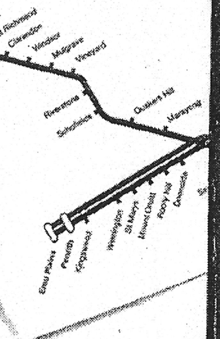
Bus Bus tickets are available from the driver, be nice to them, even if they're (and they generally are) nasty to you. Sydney bus drivers have one of the higest suicide rates of any workers in Australia. Bus travel is cheaper if you buy a

'travelten' ticket, available from most newsagents. Each travelten is valid for 10 trips and has no expiry date (though it doesn't work if it gets crumpled or wet).
The cost is calculated by the length of the trip. cheapest- blue travelten for short trips, brown travelten for longer ones. For any international visitors- you have to signal the bus, even if you're at a bus stop, and press the red buttons to signal you'd like to get off.
To save cash, try getting a blue one and using it for longer journeys....

but beware the EVIL GREY GUARDS. they are often nasty and regularly prowl Sydney public transport. The fine for having an incorrect ticket is $150

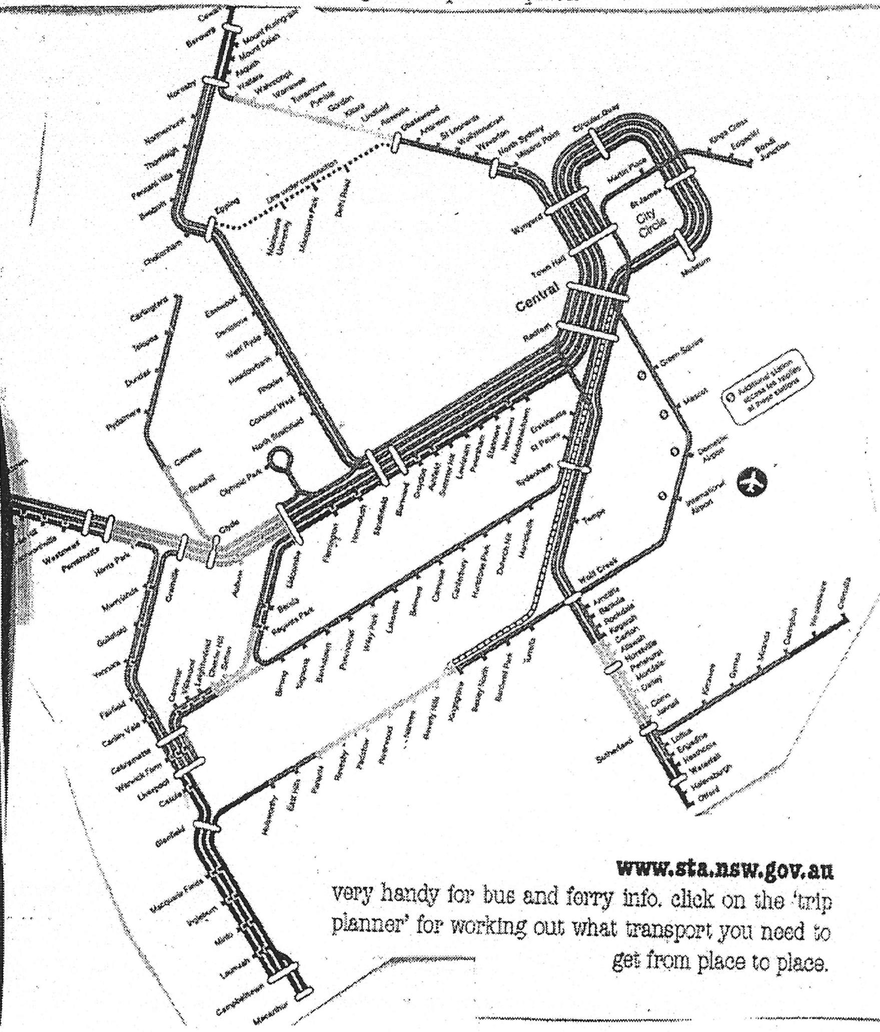






Concessions as far as we know, concessions are only available to students in possession of a NSW concession card. Half fare entitlements may be ok in NSW, but check when you buy your ticket. You can buy concession traveltens for cheaper, and won't have to show a concession card when you purchase.... but once more heed the grey guard warning. they will ask to see your concession card as well as your ticket.

trains Train tickets, including returns, have to be used the same day (til 3am). Trains run from about 4am til about midnight. In the wee hours, there are nightride buses with do the same routes. Prices are higher during peak times. Bikes are usually free, but must be paid for at peak hour.
There are snazzy machines at most train statons where the ticket can be popped through, and the gates open to enter. It is possible to force these open. or to walk swiftly and get through the opening with the person behind you. many stations don't have electronic gates (eg.newtown)
All stations have CCTV.
There are some other tourist type discounts, day tickets and weeklies. for more info see **www.cityrail.info** or call **transport info line 131500**
www.sta.nsw.gov.au very handy for bus and ferry info. click on the 'trip planner' for working out what transport you need to get from place to place.



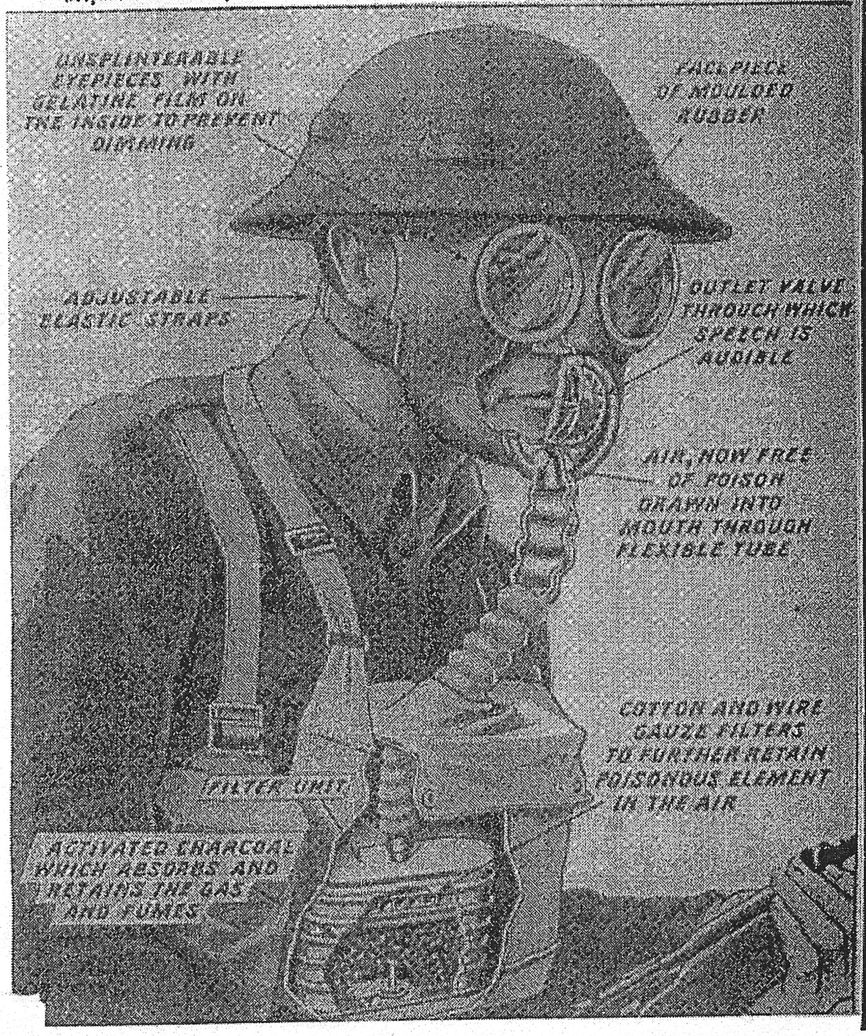
www.sta.nsw.gov.au
very handy for bus and ferry info. click on the 'trip planner' for working out what transport you need to get from place to place.

ACTION FASHION

The following is taken almost word for word from the Anarchist Anti-WTO Survival Kit Guide for Seattle and elsewhere

http://www.infoshop.org/octo/survival_kit

Don't forget to sleep, eat and drink lots of water.
Take care of yourself!
If you are grounded, well-rested, fed and watered you'll have much more fun in the action.
Be prepared.
Dress appropriately (this is not a fashion parade)


UNSPLINTERABLE EYEPIECES WITH GELATINE FILM ON THE INSIDE TO PREVENT DIMMING
FACEPIECE OF MOULDED RUBBER
ADJUSTABLE ELASTIC STRAPS
OUTLET VALVE THROUGH WHICH SPEECH IS AUDIBLE
AIR, NOW FREE OF POISON DRAWN INTO MOUTH THROUGH FLEXIBLE TUBE
COTTON AND WIRE GAUZE FILTERS TO FURTHER RETAIN POISONOUS ELEMENT IN THE AIR
FILTER UNIT
ACTIVATED CHARCOAL WHICH ABSORBS AND RETAINS THE GAS AND FUMES

CLOTHING- should be protective and durable, light weight (to allow for great mobility), and tight fitting while covering the entire body (to protect from tear gas, pepper spray and sun). Think creatively. Make your clothing a costume, make it a political statement. Make it protective, wear creative shields to protect you.

Protective Shoes- think comfy, something you can run in.

Accessorise- to protect yourself from sun/rain. Bring a pair of big goofy goggles or a gas mask to use in case of capsicum spray, and a bandana soaked in vinegar.
Fresh clothing in a plastic bag to be super prepared in case yours get contaminated.

WHAT TO BRING

Lots of water- plastic bottles with squirt top are good to drink and to wash off your skin/eyes if necessary.

Food- energy snacks for you and to share.

A little cash- incl. change to pay phone/food/transport

Basic 1st Aid stuff (refer to the next pages in the booklet for details)

Whistle/Noisemakers

All purpose tool- bottle/can opener, screwdriver, awl/cork screw, tweezers

Pen and note paper

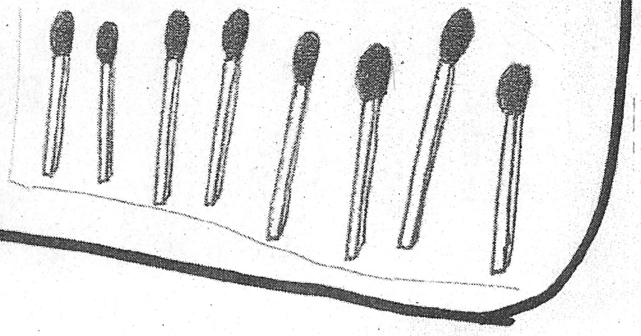
Prescription Drugs- your inhaler, insulin and any mediacation you require

Communication Equipment- Bring witnessing equipment, portable radios, communication devices, etc.

Menstrual Pads,if needed- avoid using tampons. If you're arrested you may not have a chance to change it (tampons left in more than 6 hours increase your risk of developing toxic shock syndrome)
Legal contact no.
Try to leave pets at home.

ACTION FASHION FAUX PAS

Don't put vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturisers on skin as they can trap chemicals.
Don't wear contact lenses as they can trap irritating chemicals underneath.
Don't wear dangly things that can easily be grapped eg. earrings, loose hair, jewellery.
Facial piercings make great targets for shift pressure points, so leave them at home.
Don't go to the demo alone if you can help it. Make a buddy who you keep an eye on and vice versa. Try and form an affinity group with likeminded people (for more details see the section on affinity groups on page)

NOTES.....